Notes from me

This is a work in progress. Things might get moved or edited as I find new evidence. Not all theories in this doc are mine. I will always credit OP for any theories that I didn't think of with a link to the original post. I also will always include links to sources for any kind of elaborate research or references to posts. (I like to pay attention to symbolism so if that isn't something your thing, this doc might not be for you.)

Things have been ramping up a lot at work lately so I haven't had the time or honestly the energy to update this as much as before. So sorry guys :(I'm still trying to add things here and there but it's definitely not at the same level of detail as the last few weeks.

tumblr: smalltownshrimp
email: redvelvet.teej@gmail.com

When someone tells me they don't believe in conformitygate:

#vecna

Timeline

Summary

- Nov 26 = 5.01-5.04 release date.
- Dec 25 = 5.05-5.07 release date.
- Dec 31 = 5.08 release date.
- Jan 7 = JCB's countdown begins. Orthodox Christmas.
- Jan 12 = Documentary release date.
    - Released at 3AM EST but social media accounts didn't post about it until exactly 10AM (7 hours later).
- Jan 17 = Finn hosts SNL.
- Jan 18 = Closing credits posted on social media accounts.
    - JCB's countdown ends & no other posts since then.
    - 18 days after Dec 31. → 5.01 started 18 months after 4.09.
    - Also the day that a **caesura** appeared on the #conformitygate tag on Twitter. Caesuras indicate an **interruption or a break**, particularly a pause near the middle of a line. → Middle of a line? Middle of S5?
        - "In Old English poetry, the caesura is used to emphasize an articulated pause that occurs in the middle of lines **that would otherwise be monotonous and droning**."
- Jan 23 = Billie Joe Armstrong (Green Day) releases his cover of Heroes.
- Jan 28 = Pre-ordered WSQK vinyl shipping date.
- Feb 2 = Stranger Things Tales from '85 teaser is released.
- Feb 5 = ? → Unsure what this could be but it's 18 days after Jan 18…Epilogue happens 18 months after the main timeline ends.
- Feb 8 = Super Bowl, Green Day will be performing at the half-time show.
- Feb 14 = Valentine's Day, Day of Hearts.
- Feb 15 = Duffer's Birthday. Orthodox Candlemas.
- Feb 18 = Chinese New Year (Year of the Horse)
    - 6 weeks after Jan 7.
    - 12 weeks after Nov 26.

Super Bowl

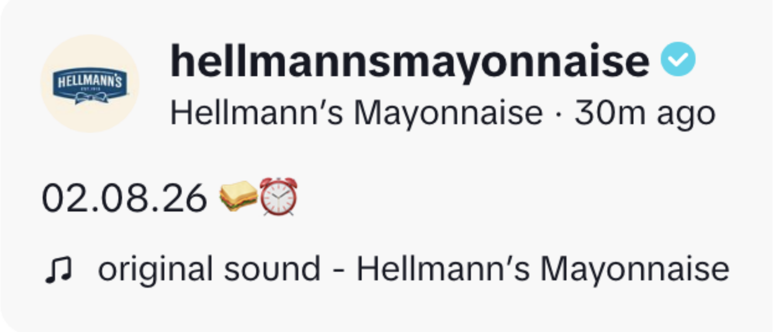
- **Feb 8** → Super Bowl day in the US. It's possible that this could be a day for an announcement.
- The Super Bowl isn't just for people who watch football, as in it's not just about it being a football game. It's more about the gatherings, the food, the **advertisements**, and the **half-time show.** → It's actually incredibly common to hear people say something to the effect of "I hate football but I watch the Super Bowl for the ads."
- The ads in particular are like a whole other production in themselves. It's known to be incredibly expensive to get ad slots during the Super Bowl, and so those ads end up

being some of the greatest pieces of media that those companies put out. → Since a good majority of the US will be watching, it's very possible that there could be an advertisement for a new episode or volume.

- There could also be something like that during the half-time show, which is basically like a concert. (There are actually tickets you can buy where you are only allowed in for the half-time show and then you're escorted back out.)
    - This year's performer is Bad Bunny, and they are asking for people to **apply for field cast positions**. The description asks for people who are:
        - over 6 feet tall
        - athletic, non-dancing but able to do choreographed movements,
        - able to wear a full body costume that covers the whole head and body
        - Able to wear a costume that can weigh up to 40 pounds.

    - This could really be a lot of things but it sounds like they might be **looking for people to be demogorgons.**
    - "Field Cast will not receive tickets to watch the Super Bowl game. This role is about performing the show, not watching it. But Field Cast will be **an integral part of one of the most iconic productions in live entertainment.**" → Sorry but I don't think anything will ever be more iconic than Usher in 2024 or Kendrick Lamar dropping shade on the US government in 2025. Unless that production is about to announce a new episode.
- Super Bowl LX is in Santa Clara, CA. → Thinking about this interview where the boys were asked questions about their phones and one of them was about which cities they have on their weather app. Gaten said he only has Santa Clara, and he doesn't think he's ever even been there.
        - People are trying to say that the default weather location for Apple products is Santa Clara but it's actually Cupertino, which is where Apple headquarters is located.
- Also, if the announcement is made during the Super Bowl, that is **exactly one week** before Feb 15, the Duffer's birthday. "The week is long."
- Hellmann's ad turned into an ST announcement? → Jake Connelly (Derek) told his friends he was doing a mayo documentary when he was cast in S5 about 2 weeks after Hellmann's secured an ad spot in the Super Bowl.
    - Hellmann's already has a longstanding partnership with Stranger Things.
    - The Super Bowl is also being held at Levi's stadium & Levi's also has a partnership with ST. Not that this means it was on purpose, but it definitely means Levi's has a minor financial stake in this and would support using the Super Bowl to advertise for ST.
    - S2 was announced with an ad in the Super Bowl for Eggos that glitched and became the trailer/announcement.
    - Netflix posted this picture on their finsta (putting it here instead of linking it because the account regularly goes on private) & Hellmann's posted a TikTok with the date of the Super Bowl and a **sandwich** and a **clock** on the same day.

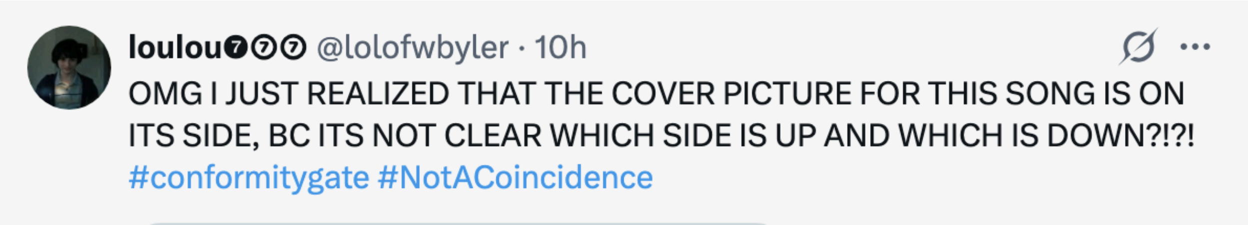
~~There was other stuff that I saw with Hellmann's posting that exact sandwich in other videos/pictures but now I can't find any of them.~~



~~Screaming~~.

Green Day

- **Green Day** is also supposed to be performing during the Super Bowl. On Jan 26, **Green Day posted about a cover they did of Heroes** on Instagram with an image of cracked glass. ⟶ Cracked glass is a recurring theme in the show.
  - The cracked clock in S4.
  - The cover of TIME Magazine that featured the core six also looked like cracked glass over Mike's heart. (See more under The Truman Show.)

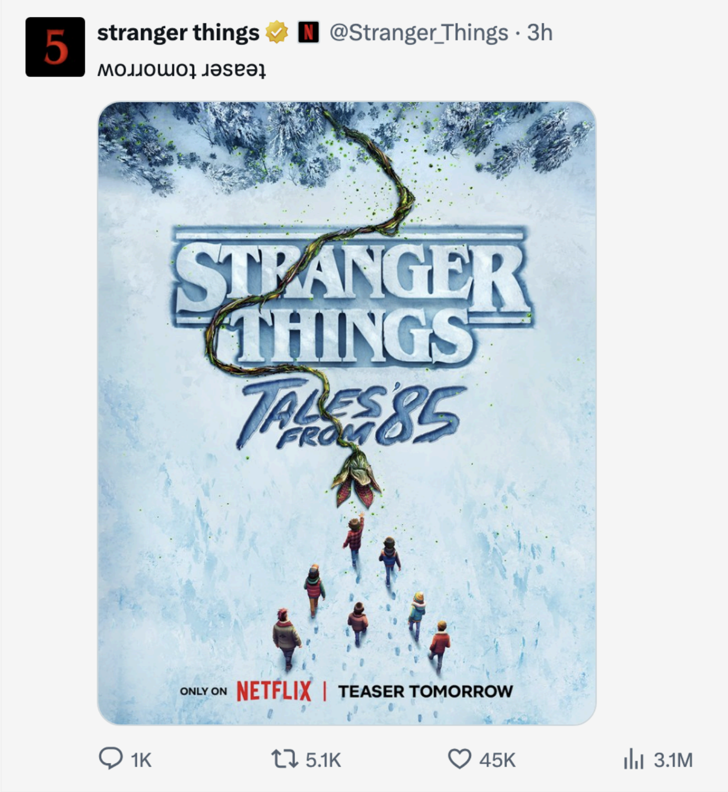


- This cover sounds a lot like the music that was used in one of the Vol. 2 trailers. Listen here. ⟶ That trailer is not listed anywhere on Tudum or Youtube or anywhere else anymore.
- Blue + Yellow = Green & Super Bowl is in California ⟶ "When blue and yellow meet in the West."
  - I don't think this was on purpose because you can't predict which teams will play in the Super Bowl, but it's still fun.
- Billie Joe Armstrong is a known ST fan, and has done collabs with Gaten and is also friends with Winona.

- Target & NFL & Stranger Things Collab I guess?

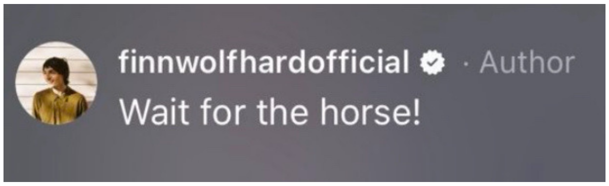
February Dates

- **“The week is long.”** ⟶ An announcement for a new episode will likely come 1 week before the episode airs.
- **Feb 1** - new post from the Stranger Things accounts. They all decided to come out of hiding with this one. I don’t know guys, it’s sus to me.
    - List of people who have shared it so far: Ross Duffer, Shawn Levy, Finn Wolfhard
    - Coincidence that Finn is the only cast member who reposted this?



- **Feb 2** - Groundhog Day, and the day the teaser is dropping. ⟶ Also the name of a famous movie where the main character is stuck in a time loop where he is forced to relive the same day over and over, making different decisions in order to break the cycle.
    - Also my brother in law’s birthday, shoutout to Vito <3
- Valentine’s Day aka Day of Hearts.
    - The d20 from Google’s ST animation starts on 20 with its surrounding numbers clearly shown: 2, 14, 8. ⟶ Feb 14 @ 8PM (EST).

- **Feb 15** ⟶ Duffer brothers' birthday & 1 day after the Day of Hearts.
  - The official WSQK radio is launching on Feb 16.
  - Duffers said "It'll be a dark Christmas." (And then pretty much nothing happened.) ⟶ Feb 15 is Orthodox Candlemas: a major feast that celebrates Christ being presented in the temple 40 days after his birth, where he is recognized as the "Light to the Gentiles."
    - "Candlemas reminds us that Jesus came as a light shining in the darkness, and He calls us to be a light for the world." (Source.)
  - ~~I genuinely hate how much Stranger Things has me looking into Christian symbolism nowadays.~~
  - Vol. 2 came out on Christmas… but also **Jan 7 was Orthodox Christmas**… and nothing happened on that day either. ⟶ Orthodox Christmas was a "dark" Christmas, and Candlemas will bring out the light.
- **Feb 18** ⟶ 6 weeks from Jan 7 & 12 weeks from Nov 26.
  - The official WSQK station finished broadcasting on Jan 1 at 11PM. Around 10:50PM on Jan 1, the hosts gave their final message and said, "It feels like we've been with you for a lifetime, when actually it's only been 6 weeks."
    - When playing that final message on Jan 1, you can hear distorted clock chimes and ticking in the background.
  - Also a Wednesday.
  - "A trip to China sounds nice." ⟶ 1 day after the lunar new year starts, the start of the year of the horse. (Original post.)
    - Apparently Finn posted this before he hosted SNL but then deleted it.



Altering Reality, Time, and Memories

Stephen King Theory

- The idea that Stranger Things is like a thank you letter to Stephen King. (Original video.)

- The Dark Tower series (one of King's more popular works) deals with a lot of instances of breaking the fourth wall, in which the book tells (and practically begs) the reader to stop reading at a point when the ending seems like it could be a happy one.
- Upon reading further, the reader discovers that the main character is actually **stuck in a time loop** that makes them repeat events over and over as they try to make tiny adjustments to their actions to get out of the loop.
- There's many other parallels to DT like evil wizards, other worlds, time manipulation, doors in the open that lead to other places in space and time.
    - Lucas is reading The Talisman to Max when she first goes into her coma.
    - The font of the title is the same as King's font in his earlier books.
    - Stephen King. Stranger Things. Stephen Things. Stranger King. Stephen Thing. Strangen King. ~~You get what I'm sayin?~~
- Side note: King is also well known for writing many of his characters with gay undertones that often go unnoticed by those who wouldn't understand them.
- Other King books besides DT that involve time manipulation & trying to redo wrongs from the past.
    - 11/22/63
    - Just After Sunset
    - The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon

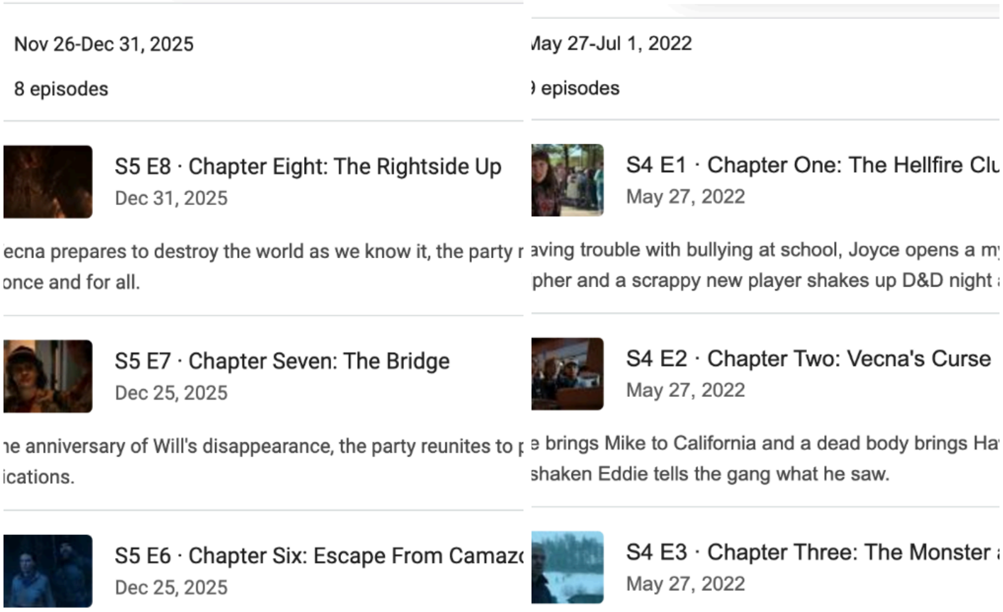
Eternal Sunshine

- **Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind** is on the list of movies to watch before S5 → a movie about memories being erased/changed.
    - Mike and Will parallel Joel and Clementine's outfits for seemingly no reason. In the movie, Joel (MIke) is undergoing a procedure that removes/changes his memories to erase Clementine (Will) from his life.

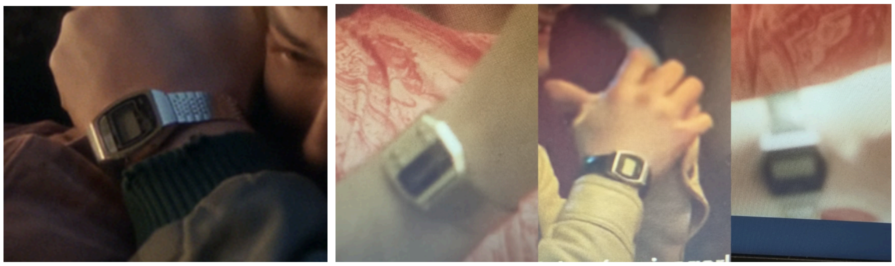
    - This instagram post has the caption "meet me in philly." → A direct reference to the film's iconic line "meet me in Montauk."
- There's consistent imagery about time moving backwards or the concept of time not existing, mostly in S5 but also throughout the show. → In this movie, Joel experiences his memories of Clementine in reverse.
    - On Google, the episode guide for S5 re-listed the episodes in descending order (8→1), while S1-4 were all listed in ascending order (1→8). This is how Google lists episodes for **unfinished** shows BUT the pattern is usually consistent across all the seasons. If the

show is unfinished, all seasons will have their episodes in descending order. Almost like S5 specifically is meant to be seen in reverse or just further pushing the “time is messed up” narrative.

- Also something kind of poetic about this and how it means that 5.08, titled the Rightside Up, is at the very “top” of the episode list while 1.08, titled the Upside Down, is at the very “bottom.”
- 8 is the only number that is the same when flipped upside down. → Uhhh blah blah blah something something **the Rightside Up is still the Upside Down**.



- Somewhere in vol2, watches and clocks stopped displaying the dates/times.

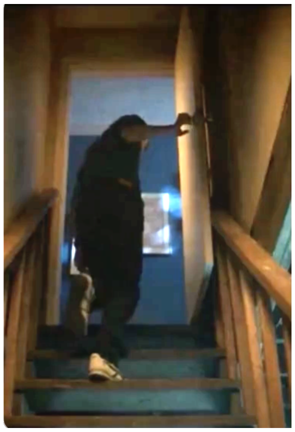


- For reference, this is a shot from 5.04 where we can see the time on Lucas’ watch. (I increased the contrast and lowered the brightness to see it better.)

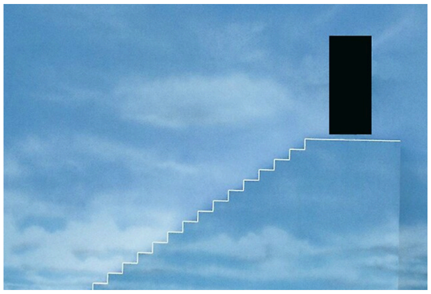
- Video footage used to show the date and time but that stopped in the epilogue.

The Truman Show

- **The Truman Show** is a movie that explores themes about **reality vs. illusion** & manipulating perception.
- In the movie, Truman Burbank is a man who “unknowingly lives his entire life inside a massive, domed television studio, with everyone he knows (family, friends, wife) being paid actors, and his every moment is broadcasted live to the world without his consent.”
- Truman starts noticing strange **inconsistencies** in his life that lead him to figure out that the reality he’s perceiving is being manipulated and isn’t actually correct.
- In Will’s coming out scene, Will name-drops a bunch of products & brand names almost like a bombardment of advertisements. ⟶ This is something that also happens in the Truman Show.
- The final shot of Mike walking up the basement stairs and closing the door is also a parallel to the Truman Show.



- Also the door in the middle of the field surrounded by a cloudy blue sky is very Truman Show. The original post about that makes me wonder if we'll see Mike exit the basement and end up in this field.



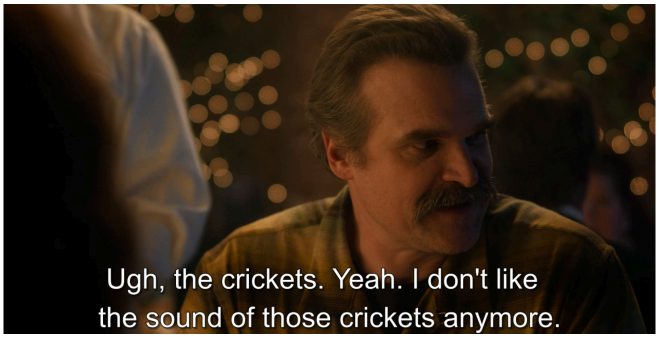
- In the epilogue, Will is wearing a similar shirt to Sylvia, Truman's one true love, as opposed to his fake, "perfect," actor wife.

- The Time Magazine interview that the cast did also references The Truman Show with the blue sky/cloudy background & the formatting of the words. ⟶ Finn (Mike) is at the center of the photo on the cover.
    - The cover photo also shows glass cracks that almost look like puppet strings connecting to Finn's heart. (Original post.) ⟶ Recall the post for Green Day's cover of Heroes that had an image of cracked glass.

- Truman and Joel (in Eternal Sunshine) are both played by Jim Carrey. Jim Carrey's birthday is Jan 17, the same date that Finn hosted SNL. ~~I don't even know how something like that would be planned but that is also just an insane coincidence.~~

Moving to Montauk

- When Hopper asks Joyce to move to Montauk with him, he says how he doesn't like the sound of **crickets** anymore, and he wants to replace it with the sound of seagulls.
  - The plot twist in Wayward Pines is that the whole town is fake, and the cricket sounds are the thing that makes the protagonist realize this. (Original post)



  - The Duffers have regularly (until 5.07 at least) demonstrated that they're following the concept of **Chekhov's gun:** a narrative principle, named after the playwright Anton Chekhov, that states that **every element in a story must be necessary and serve a purpose**. → Chekhov also wrote a play called **The Seagull.**
    - The seagull in the play starts off as symbolizing freedom → the whole epilogue is like a symbol of freedom. (From Vecna, the UD, school, Hawkins, etc.)
    - Later on in the play, the seagull becomes a symbol of destruction at the hands of a loved one. (aka Will the Spy)

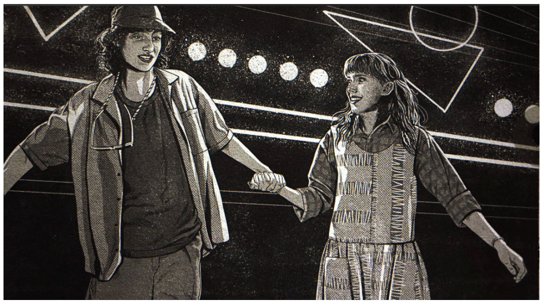
        - The Seagull is also about a play within a play. Much like how the First Shadow also was about a play within a play. And now the finale is like a fictional story within the tv show aka a play within a play.

Spiderman: No Way Home

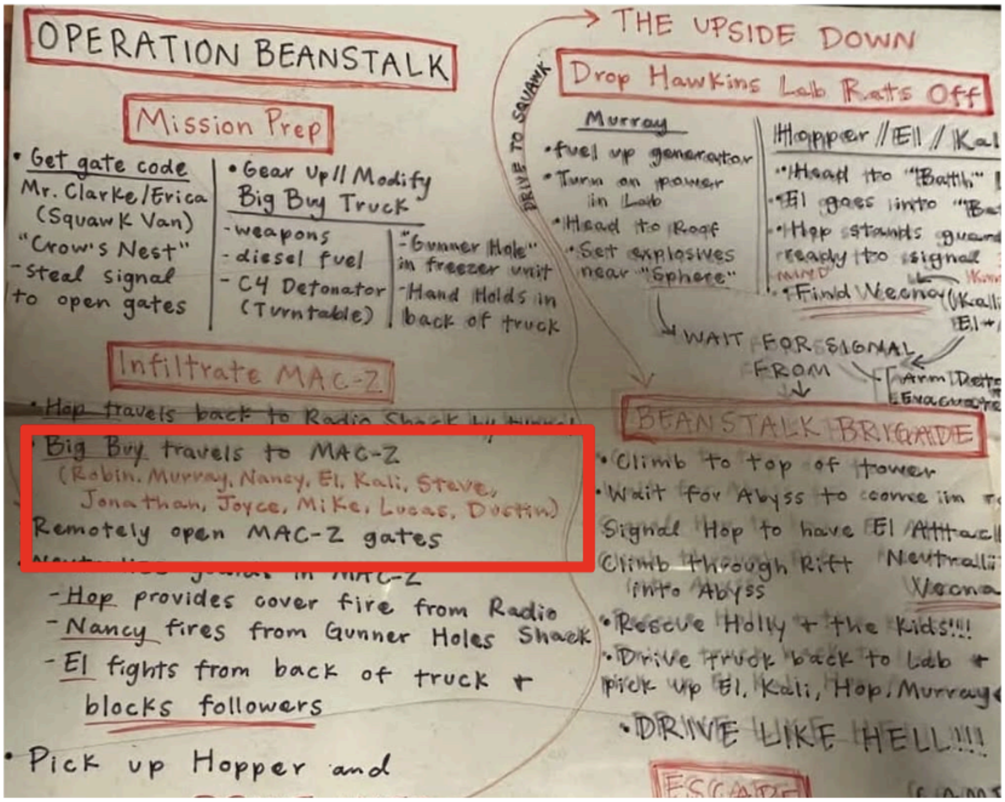
- Mike & Will also parallel Peter Parker and MJ in **Spiderman: No Way Home** ⟶ a movie that ends with MJ being put **under a spell** that makes her forget Peter.

Erasing Will

- Will mentions memories that seem like Henry's are bleeding into his mind starting in vol. 2.
    - Malted milkshakes at Melvald's. ⟶ Melvald's is a convenience store in the show, but in the play about Henry, it was a diner. Also, malted milkshakes were a big thing in the 50s more than the 80s.
    - "We like getting lost in the woods" ⟶ why would Will like getting lost in the woods? That's how he was taken.
    - In 5.01, Mike calls Joyce "Mrs. Byers." Then, in 5.06, he calls her "Joyce." ⟶ Strange since those episodes are only a few days apart.
        - But you know who would call Joyce by her first name? Someone who knew her in high school. Someone like Henry. ⟶ If Henry is building this illusion, this would be another example of his memories bleeding in.
- Will ends up being erased/left out from most of the ending D&D montage despite the Duffers saying "this is a show about Will."
    - One photo actually straight up removed Will from the shot altogether & also has some geometric shapes added in that conveniently match the shapes seen on Bronski Beat's album cover for The Age of Consent: the album that includes **Smalltown Boy.** (Original post.)
    - For those who don't know, Smalltown Boy is about a boy who wants to run away from his home town where he feels like he needs to hide his true self, particularly highlighting the experiences of the queer community, and it's heavily associated with Mike.



- In 5.06, Robin pulls records from the shelf to symbolize characters. She uses those albums with songs that were explicitly associated with their character.
  - Max: Running Up That Hill
  - Holly: I think we're alone now…
  - Will: London Calling? → Why would she use **London Calling** for Will? Will's song has always been Should I Stay or Should I Go from the album **Combat Rock**.
    - Apparently London Calling was known for having a "hidden song" called Train in Vain, better known as Stand by Me. → This post says: "London Calling was released Dec. 14 1979 (year of Rainbow room massacre) and had an extra song added at the last minute. Due to this, it wasn't on any vinyl covers or listed anywhere making it an unintended hidden song."
- During the montage that showed everyone's traumatic experiences from the UD and the Mind Flayer, Mike only remembers El disappearing the first time, even though he also had many other traumatic experiences that involved Will. (ex: seeing Will's body being removed from the water; trying to get Will back in the shed scene.)
  - When Will sees Henry's memories in the cave, he says the Mind Flayer didn't want Henry in the cave so that he wouldn't remember what happened. → The Mind Flayer doesn't want Mike to remember Will because Will might be the tether that can pull Mike back to reality.
- If Will is lost, Mike is the one who's always been good at finding Will.
  - 2.02 - After pulling Will out of his vision on Halloween night, Mike says "I couldn't **find** you."
  - 2.04 - When Joyce is running to Will on the field, Mike says, "I just **found** him like this."
- In the battle plans that the government finds at the WSQK, **Will isn't mentioned AT ALL** with the rest of the group.



- Gaten and Caleb joined Finn on SNL, and Noah did not, even though Noah was there for the show.
- Shawn Levy made this Instagram post on Jan 17 with a bunch of cast pictures. Only one of those pictures includes Noah (and his back is to the camera in that one).
- This post on Instagram with the caption "told ya. i don't believe in coincidences." shows the parallels of these scenes from S1 and S5. → Will isn't seen at all in the photo from S5, it almost looks like Max replaced him.

A Wrinkle in Time

- The main message of the whole book is that **love**, individuality, and bravery triumphs over evil, **conformity**, and darkness.
- [More coming soon.]

Trance vs. Real World

- When Will is supposedly in a vision in the UD in 5.05, Vecna does his vec-magic on him and he starts bleeding from the eyes. → We've never seen Vecna's victims bleed in their dream state; they only bleed in the real world.
  - Will was actually taken to the UD, and we just didn't see it happen. → This also makes sense with [this game/interview]() that the core 4 did that included the question "When did Will get taken to the UD?" (~3:10) and Noah answers Nov 6, obviously. But then curiously, Gaten adds, "**Both times.**"

- Comparing that with this moment in 4.09 of Max in the dream state being attacked by Vecna in the same way that Will is in 5.05, but she isn't bleeding.

Coraline

- In the epilogue, Mike also resembles Coraline's father. → Another movie where the villain builds another world centered around a false sense of happiness and perfection in order to trap Coraline there. To escape, she has to look for clues (specifically **inconsistencies** or **mistakes**) to find her way out.

- The villain in Coraline, the Other Mother, also resembles a spider.

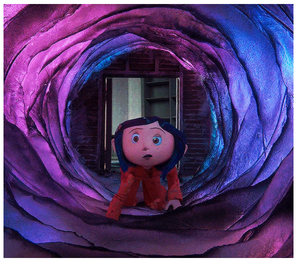
- The Other Mother steals her victims' eyes and puts buttons instead. ⟶ Eyes are traditionally known as "windows to the soul," and removing them represents a **loss of identity** and **forced conformity**. (Source.)
- The Other Mother asks Coraline to stay in the Other World forever and let her sew buttons in Coraline's eyes. She says "black is traditional" but Coraline can choose another color if she wants. ⟶ Mike's eyes are blacked out in Will's demo vision in 5.04, more so than anyone else's eyes are, almost like his eyes have been removed or replaced with something else.

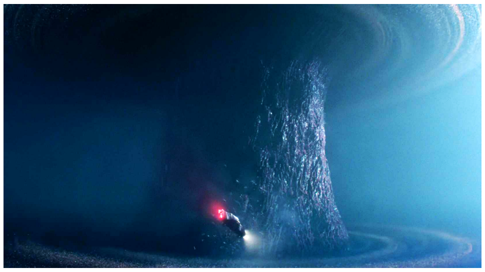
  - Black buttons can also be a symbol that bad luck is coming.

    - There are several instances of the color purple showing up in 5.08 and the song **Purple** Rain plays during Mike's vision of El. → Recall how Dustin mentions that **Violet prismatic spray** causes blindness in 5.01. There's actually **a second effect** to the violet prismatic spray.
        - "On a failed save, the target is blinded. It must then make a **Wisdom saving throw** at the start of your next turn. A successful save ends the blindness. **If it fails that save, the creature is transported to another plane of existence of the GM's choosing** and is no longer blinded. (Source.)
        - A Wisdom saving throw is a d20 roll to resist mental effects, illusions, charms, or fear by testing your willpower, common sense, or intuition against an opposing force, **determining if you can shake off an enchantment or see through a deception**. → Mike wasn't able to figure out that everything was an illusion or wasn't actually real, so it's like he **failed his Wisdom saving throw.**
- Coraline is also a story in which details in the set design, script, props, and music is done with a specific purpose and can/should be analyzed in great depth. The movie's ending prompted a lot of debate around whether or not Coraline actually escaped because of some details in the epilogue that suggest she's still in the Other World but doesn't realize.
- Neil Gaiman also wrote Coraline for his daughter, **Holly**.
- When I was younger I watched Coraline over and over again because it was the one of the only things available for free, but also the Making of Coraline was free so I would watch that over and over as well. (it was also like a documentary style BTS). And I remember interviews with Neil Gaiman in that documentary and he talked about how his inspiration behind Coraline all stems from fear and learning to be brave.
    - He said, "I used to think being brave meant that you weren't scared. As I got older I realized that being brave is all about being scared."
        - I have thought about this quote probably at least once a week for the last 20 years.
    - Mike Wheeler who hides behind his alternate persona Mike the Brave because he doesn't want to admit or show how scared he is. Mike Wheeler who watched Will come out to his friends and family and state that he isn't afraid anymore. Mike Wheeler who never actually had a significant moment of bravery because to him, bravery still means pretending that he isn't scared.
    - I know you guys didn't ask for my background story of my obsession with Coraline but you got it.
- To get to the Other World, Coraline has to climb through this tunnel which acts like a **bridge** between the real world and the Other Mother's world with a little trap door on each end. → Similar to how the UD is supposed to be a wormhole that acts as a bridge between the real world and Dimension X.
    - The structure of the wormhole makes it look an awful lot like a tunnel, which I wouldn't really care about as much but I remembered this scene right at the end (sorry spoiler) where Coraline escapes through the first door and locks the door. The Other Mother starts screaming and banging on the door trying to get to her before Coraline can get

through the tunnel and lock the second door as well. ⟶ As she's screaming, the tunnel shrinks down and the two doors at each end of the tunnel get closer together, like the two worlds are merging or crashing into each other.

    - Two locks on two different doors. ⟶ Two-man rule. Two keys needed.
    - Not to mention that the tunnel definitely looks like some kind of cosmic black hole already.





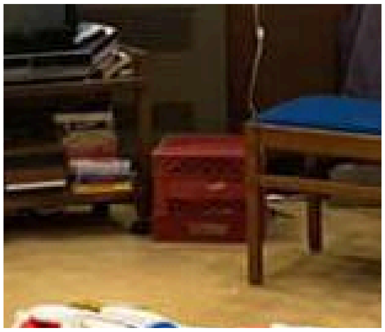
Plot Points

Targeting Mike

- When Vecna first appears in 5.04, **Mike spots him first and a clock chimes** ⟶ right before the epilogue happens, the camera is on Mike and then fades to black, **we hear a heartbeat, then a clock ticking, then the ticking blends into the construction noise**.
    - Clock chimes are used to symbolize Vecna's victims
        - When Max dies in S4 there are 4 chimes.
        - When the Abyss starts moving in the finale, there are 5 distinct chimes. ⟶ Mike could be the 5th victim.
    - The Duffers are now saying the number 12 doesn't have any significance but… 12 is regularly used to symbolize time/clocks.

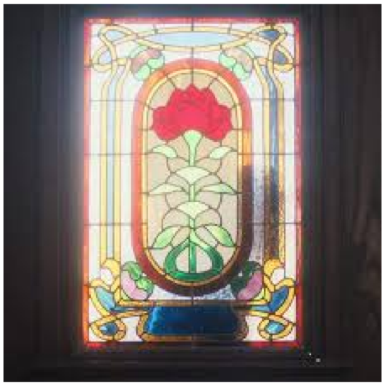
        - There were exactly 12 people at the graduation wearing sunglasses. → This could be alluding to the idea of having a distorted view of the world since sunglasses make everything darker. #backtothelight

- In the final battle, Mike's weapon is a flare gun. → Flare guns are used to signal distress.
- 5.07, Kali looks directly at Mike while she says she can follow El into Henry's mind.
- 5.02 was teased as The Vanishing of ***** Wheeler & Ross posted on his instagram "yeah yeah you think you know who blah blah." → Maybe it could be Mike who truly went missing?
    - Max continuously compares Holly to Mike. She even says to Holly: "You ARE your brother."
    - Karen then teases this in 5.08 when she calls Joyce to say she can't find Mike.
- Mike has the crate that Robin uses to represent being trapped in your own mind in 5.06 in his dorm room.



- Mike's demogorgon sweater & Mike's demogorgon tie. (Original post.)

    - I can't stop thinking about this damn sweater and how it also looks like the Creel's front door window with the rose but I don't know what that means yet.



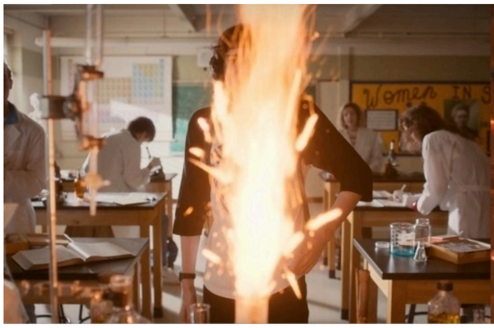
- In S3, there was emphasis on needing “two keys to close the gate.” Before S5 premiered, there were a lot of theories about Will having powers and then Will & El being the “two keys.”
    - In S3, Hopper also says “getting to Mike, that’s the key.” → Mike is especially important to both Will AND El so getting to him (kidnapping/trapping him) would be Vecna’s key to winning.
- When Vecna comes into the MAC-Z, he throws Mike & the kids to the side and Mike is knocked unconscious. There is speculation that this could be the moment that Mike’s trance started (either he’s still unconscious or the events we’re seeing happening aren’t correct).
    - When Robin is talking about Will/Max/Holly and how they’re all in the same place, she says **they all have one thing in common: that they’re all unconscious.**
    - Mike says to the group that if they move quick enough, they can get to the Radio Shack and get out of there. → Bob worked at Radio Shack. Bob was killed because he didn’t move fast enough to escape…Mike = Bob I guess idk
- In the S4 ending, Noah talked about how difficult it was to hit the right marks in the field. The shot we see has Mike exactly in the **center** of the screen.

    - We’ve always been told “X marks the spot.” → when Holly is looking for an escape route, she says “**M marks the spot.**”
        - Well… his name isn’t Xike.
        - Will’s necklace in the epilogue almost looks like it could have an “M” on it.

- When the kids are escaping the cave in the finale, Holly says to the kids, “Eyes on me. Eyes on me.” ⟶ That’s exactly what Mike said to the kids in 5.04.
    - This could just be a moment showing that Holly is his little sister and is a lot like him, but it could also be Vecna using Mike’s memories of that moment again.

Mike & Injury

- This post details more moments of referring to “sisters” killing their “brothers” and possible connections to Mike.



- Mentions of Mike’s death.

- Mike's limp in 5.01 vs. Henry's limp in 5.05.

- Mike's arm gets cut off in Will's campaign in 3.03 vs. Mike hurts his arm before the MAC-Z battle in 4.04.

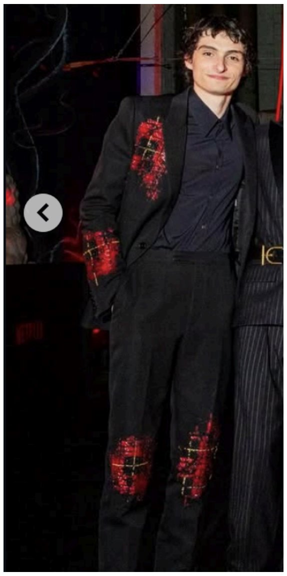
- Mike's nasty gash on his face in 3.08 vs. Henry's nasty gash on his face in 5.08.

Mike & Max

- All the parallels between Mike & Max. → Max has been regularly referred to as the "female version of Mike." (I kind of hate that wording but there are a ton of parallels between them.)
- Why can't there just be two Venkmans? #venkmangate

- Remember who else got Vecna'd and had a sweet heart-to-heart moment with someone they love that wasn't real? → How funny that it happens to be Max, just another parallel between her and Mike.

- I never would've noticed this if I hadn't been watching this episode while looking at Finn's instagram but look at how Max's jeans in S5 & Finn's premiere outfit have the same patch style. (Terrible picture for Max but it's the best I could get as of now.)



What's Mike afraid of?

- In the Stranger Things game, when Vecna is trying to use Mike's fear against him, **we never find out what Mike's fear actually is.** ⟶ Vecna tries to use the idea of losing El as his biggest fear and it doesn't work.

- The epilogue depicts almost exactly the kind of scenario Will said Vecna showed him in his coming out except it was about Mike, not Will.
- When Will talks about his vision in 5.07, he says, "Mostly you guys are worried about me then I push you away until I'm all alone."
- "**Mostly you guys are worried about me** then I push you away until I'm all alone."
  - In the epilogue Will says to Mike, "What about the **storyteller**?"
  - Mike's fear has always been the idea that the people in his life won't need him anymore. ⟶ This could be interpreted as **needing him** for help in some way OR needing his general presence in their lives.
    - In 4.08 **Mike tells Will about his fear that El won't need him anymore because she's a superhero**. ⟶ In 5.04 Mike basically gives Will the blueprints to tap into

        his own powers and become a superhero, with which Will also uses his deep love for Mike to kick start his powers.
        - In 5.07 Will reduces his deep love for Mike to a simple hallway crush, **like he doesn't need Mike anymore now that he's a superhero**. (Original post.)
- The epilogue shows Mike presenting a future where everyone seems happy but also a future where everyone moves on and leaves him behind.
    - Max & Lucas go on their movie date. → In S3, that was something they did with Mike & Will too.
    - Dustin craves knowledge so he continues his education. → The core four always loved school and knowledge all together but now Dustin is continuing that alone.
        - In 2.04, Mike specifically says that the next thing the team needs to do is "acquire more knowledge." → They used to crave knowledge together but Mike is being left behind.
    - Will moves to a new city where he meets new people and finds general acceptance and happiness. → **Epilogue Boyfriend™ looks like Mike** and seems to be wearing a jacket similar to Mike's from Vol.1.
        - We can even go as far as saying that one of Mike's fears is the idea that Will doesn't reciprocate his feelings or that Will just had a simple crush on Mike and then got over it quickly.

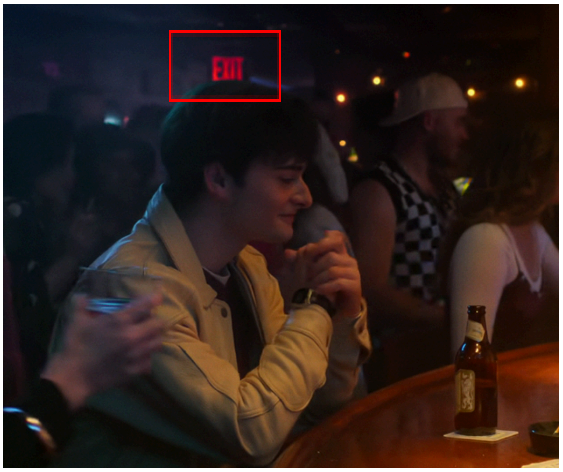
        - The Duffers are trying to say that this guy is supposed to actually be Chance. But why not just name him Chance…
        - They specifically call out how his jacket looks like Chance's letterman jacket, but it doesn't. It looks like Mike's jacket. But they're still trying to draw our attention *to the jacket.*

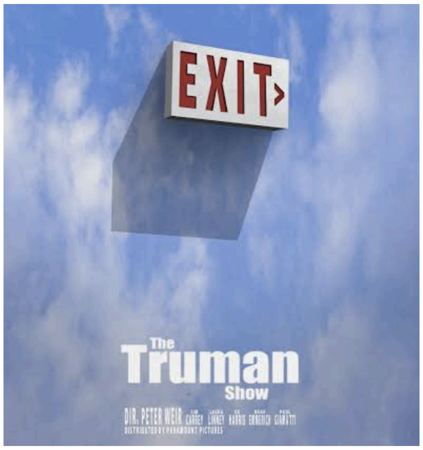
> In expansive interviews from places like TheWrap and Collider, the Duffers have been answering the questions people have been asking, revealing "while Mike and Will were never in the cards for a romantic relationship, we've always tried to hint at one between Will and background character Chance Lawson...". This comes as a shock to many fans many believing Will ended up with the epilogue boyfriend dubbed 'Carlton' by fans.
>
> This confusion has been cleared up by the Duffers, as they stated "if you look at Will's boyfriend's jacket in the epilogue, it's meant to be similar to Chance's letterman jacket he wears throughout the show, hinting at them being an established couple post-canon". When you examine the show through this lens you can understand how they set this up.

        - "That he wears throughout the show." → Boy whatchu mean "throughout the show??" He was in one episode?????
        - Update on Mike's fear: Wil not only got over Mike super fast, but he also ends up with an asshole/bully instead.
    - Mike however stays (or gets left behind) in Hawkins, writing stories about the past, and "the ones he can never tell."
    - We never actually got to see Will's vision from Vecna - how weird considering that this is "a show about Will," and we saw Vecna-induced visions for every other character who experienced them (including Hopper randomly even though it was so unnecessary in my opinion).
- Mike gives the "Holly the Heroic" figurine to Holly and tells her about "Mike the Brave" and how he uses that persona to compartmentalize his emotions and not let anyone see that he's so scared all the time. → Holly's necklace breaks when she's fighting the other children, showing **how suppressing your emotions and fears to pretend they aren't real doesn't work.**
    - In the documentary, when showing that scene with Holly and Mike being filmed, they include a comment from Finn about how that scene is like "talking to a younger version of yourself." → This is what Mike wants himself to be like, and if he's truly seeing Holly as a younger version of himself, it's almost like he wishes he could've had someone older to tell him how to be brave. The scene shows what Mike wishes he had known at that time. ~~Break my fucking heart, why don't ya.~~
- "This isn't like one of your campaigns, **you don't get to write the ending.**" → El to Mike, but he quite literally did *write* their endings in the epilogue.
    - Finn also said this line is a spoiler for the finale.
    - "Comfort and happiness? Could you be more trite?" → Max about the end of the last campaign, and that's literally how the show ended.
- "I knew nobody. I had no friends, and I just felt so alone and so scared, but I saw you on the swings and you were alone, too. You were just swinging by yourself, and I just walked up to you and I asked ... I asked if you wanted to be my friend." → Heyo, Will helps bring out Mike the Brave. <3

Exit or Escape

- Max tells Holly (who apparently *is* Mike, according to Max) that she needs to look for things that are out of place (aka **inconsistencies**) in order to escape the false memory.
- Thinking back to Max talking to Holly about how to get out of Henry's mind, Max says there are **3 options:**
  1. taking your own life (aka self-destruction)
  2. accepting your fate
  3. **finding a way to escape**
- When Hopper is talking to Mike at the memorial, he says Mike has **2 options:**
  1. self-destruction "because that's what you think you deserve" (and also some hints of suicidal thoughts)
  2. accepting what happened
- It seems like Vecna is removing the concept of escape or being saved from Mike's mind (Max's 3rd option). ⟶ Maybe Will is Mike's path to escaping.
  - There's an exit sign above Will's head when he's at the bar. ⟶ Another reference to the Truman Show & symbol of escape.





  - Also many other times that exit signs show up in the epilogue like at Enzo's and the movie theater.
- Other moments of 3 becoming 2:
  - There were only 2 waterfalls seen in El's ending scene, not 3.
  - Dustin's new hellfire shirt now only has 2 dice on it when the original had 3 dice.
  - In his speech, Dustin says that there are 2 chaos classes: chaotic good & chaotic evil, but there's actually a 3rd: chaotic neutral.
- Another point on "accepting your fate" as in "**accepting that you're trapped in this world as a prisoner**."
  - Mike counts the days since El disappeared between S1 & S2.

    - When El reveals that she has also been counting the days that she's been living with Hopper (likely something she picked up from hearing Mike calling her), Hopper says "What, are you counting the days now like you're some sort of **prisoner**?"
- Mike is never able to really touch Will following 5.05 ⟶ There are several moments when he actively reaches for Will and then ends up not touching him. It's clunky and odd, like he's being blocked by a force field.
    - Max talks about how you don't need music to tether you back to reality, you just need something that evokes strong emotions ⟶ She then explains that she felt Lucas's hand when she was trying to escape the mindscape.
        - 2.02, Mike also is the one to pull Will out of his vision while they're out trick or treating.
        - In 2.05, when Mike touches Will's hand, Will is able to use that hand to break out of the Mind Flayer's hold to tap morse code.
        - And again in 2.06, you hear Mike calling Will's name several times while he zones out when they're in the hospital but he finally comes back to himself when Mike grabs his arm.
    - If Vecna is using Will as his spy, and Mike touching Will would tether both of them back to reality, Vecna would actively keep Mike from being able to touch Will. ⟶ Also, apparently this is literally how Mike breaks Will out of Vecna's control in the VR game.
- In Vol. 1, Mike doesn't have any problems touching Will. But not just in Vol. 1, Mike also hugs Will (an actual genuine hug) in 5.05 right at the beginning, and what happens? Will hugs Mike back and has this look of relief on his face as he says Mike's name.
    - This could be Will feeling happy that Mike is alive and that they're hugging but it could also be showing how Mike's touch pulls Will back to himself. I don't know if this makes sense? Like no matter what's happening, Mike's touch is always grounding for Will.

    - Recall in 2.06 how Will was able to remember Mike's name when he couldn't remember anything else. ⟶ Vecna/MF likely remembers that when Will says Mike's name again in 5.05 when they hug and decides from there to physically keep Will away from Mike.
        - It's only after this moment that we stop seeing any genuine physical contact between the two.

Will the Spy

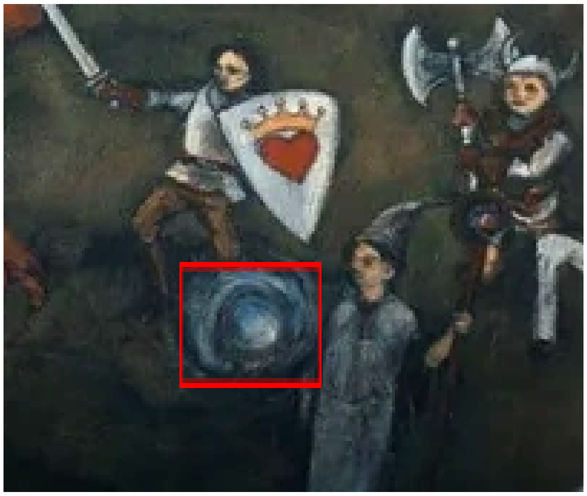
- Vecna tells Will that he will use Will as his spy again. "You were my spy. My **builder**." - It seems a bit too simple that the only thing that came from that was finding Max's location.
    - "All this time, we've been **building** it." - Billy in S3.
- Vecna tells Will that he dug the tunnels while he was sleeping. In 2.04, when Will is sleeping, we see his eyes moving around a lot - the scene actually shows a flashback of that. → In 5.06 ~12:40, when Will is unconscious, his eyes are moving in that same way again. Could he be **building** something else now?
    - In both scenes, Will's right eye is darkened.

- In 5.04, all Vecna really does when he shows up at the MAC-Z is kill all the soldiers, he calls Will a weak ass bitch, and then he just… leaves. What's the point of that?
    - My original guess was that he was taunting Will to bring out his powers on purpose until I watched 5.08 but it never amounted to anything.
    - Vecna could also have entered that situation on purpose to get to Mike?
- Vecna tells the kids that they need to bring Holly "back to the light." → The kids start chanting this ominously (low-key Lord of the Flies vibes), turning a phrase that would be associated with something good into something very sinister.
    - Will is always depicted in the light, even when it doesn't have any apparent source. → Could be a byler thing because Mike is always in the dark… could also be a trick message.

- Will hits The Henry Pose™.

- More imagery relating or labeling Will as “1.” ⟶ His t-shirt, and also Uno is found under his bed.

- When Joyce is killing Vecna, Jonathan’s traumatic memory is from Will’s exorcism in 2.09, but more specifically the moment when he yells at Joyce “you’re killing him.” Meanwhile, Will remembers his mom yelling at him to wake up. (Original post.)
- Exotic matter in Will’s painting??????? ⟶ If Brenner wasn’t actually the one to create the UD like we were told, then we still don’t know why it was frozen on Nov 6, 1983.
    - If Will is Vecna’s builder, is he the reason for the UD looking like that? Is the exotic matter actually Will’s power manifesting in the UD? (More about the exotic matter under D&D-Thirazdun.)



- The underlined portions of the newspaper clipping read: “Will was the subject of a secret government program run by Hawkins National Laboratory.” & “The abuse detailed in the first report includes prolonged physical duress and psychological interrogation.” ([Picture taken from this post.]())
    - Those are some pretty strange details to include when the cover story was supposed to be that Will got lost in the woods.

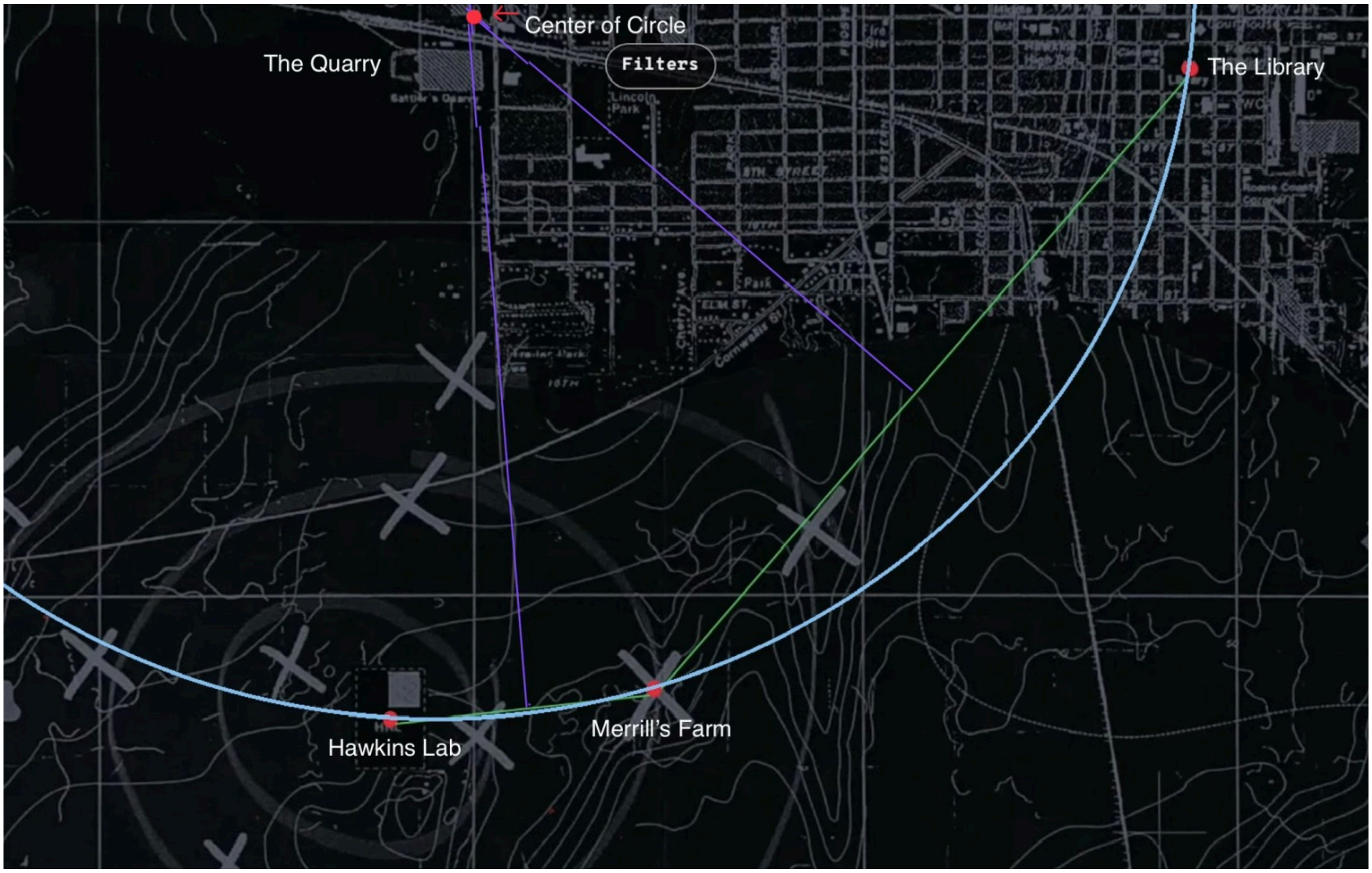
X Marks the Spot

- Will is regularly labeled with an “x” or as something that needs to be **found** - implying he is still central to the story as he always has been. If he’s lost somehow, it would explain why he was sidelined for most of the finale.
    - Will is shown in the center of the exotic matter with an X over his heart.

- Will's body was taken to the library in 1.08 & also in 5.06. → X marks the spot at the library when Vecna opens the gates in 4.09. X also marks the library in the epilogue after it's rebuilt.
  - Also Hopper says, "Thought I might find you here." when Mike is at the library.

  - Other X's: Hawkins Lab & the spot where Hopper dug his tunnels.

  - This post includes an interesting theory about **Sattler's Quarry** being the center of a circle defined by those 3 different X's—the library, the lab, and the farm where Hopper was found—similar to how Dustin used 3 points to create the map of the flesh wall circle. → We already know the quarry is significant for both Mike *and* Will.



Mike's Vision of El

- When Mike sees El standing in the gate and he starts to run to her, the soldier that grabs him calls him Mike. How would that soldier know Mike's name?
    - Apparently this also happened in the Truman Show with a police officer.
- The Duffers said it wouldn't be possible for El to bring him into the void because of the sirens. Why even bother saying that? Because the only other possible meaning behind that is they're just establishing that Mike is hallucinating because of his trauma.
    - If Mike truly is hallucinating, this scene in the van when Derek waves to Mike makes a bit more sense. ⟶ Mike is smiling, but no one is actually there, so Derek thinks Mike is smiling at him. (This post has a lot of detail about this and more!)

- This post points out how the boxes in the background behind Mike say “F203” and related it to the ICD-10 diagnosis code F20.3 that is for undifferentiated schizophrenia.

  - **FYI**: ICD-10 codes are used to classify any medical condition—physical or mental—for medical records and insurance purposes. Each condition is given a numeric code, ranging anywhere from phobia of needles to insomnia to schizophrenia to diabetes to cancer, along with all the different possible subtypes of each condition, and the subtypes of those subtypes.
  - I was very skeptical about this one at first until I also saw someone point out how the **Soteria** Method is a model of psychiatric care designed to treat psychosis and schizophrenia.
    - The model involves a community-based therapy that places patients in **small, residential-like homes** rather than locked psychiatric units. (Source: My Psychiatrist Dad.)
  - Recall **Soteria** was the name of the device that Dr. Brenner used to suppress Henry’s powers.

  - Truman gets called schizophrenic as well so it’s also another Truman Show reference.
  - Also has me thinking about the moment in 2.06 when one of the docs at the lab says “Let’s see if this kid’s a wizard or a schizo” about Will.
- El says to Mike that he understands her better than anyone. → Maybe because he still doesn't know that Will lied during the van scene conversation.
- El also says that Mike always saw the real her, then the montage shows the scene from 1.04 where El is dressed up in her blonde wig and pink dress.
- After everything, Mike STILL couldn't say “I love you” to El even when she said it to him, and he **knew** she was **literally about to die**.
  - In the promotional series that involved the cast reacting to iconic scenes from the show, Finn reacted to the fight between Mike & El in S4 when Mike couldn’t say “I love you.” When watching it, Finn said, “He does love her. So why not say it?”
    - So why not say it? SO WHY NOT SAY IT? **SO WHY NOT SAY IT?**

- Mike said he doesn’t want to have any regrets, and if he said he loved her, he would’ve regretted it because he doesn’t mean it. (For the life of me, I cannot find the post where I first saw this. If anyone sees it, please send me the link on tumblr.)
  - She was literally about to die, Michael, you could’ve just lied. → “boyfriends lie” but he’s not her boyfriend. He’s just her friend. And “friends don’t lie.”
- Bruh, what do I even say about this? The pictures say it all.

- In general, nothing about any explanation of El’s fate makes sense.
  - As the Duffers themselves pointed out, El couldn’t have pulled Mike into the void because of the kryptonite.
  - Mike’s theory is that El was able to run away while Kali used the last of her strength to make her invisible and then add in the vision of El in the UD to make everyone think she died. BUT in 5.05, it was explicitly mentioned that Kali couldn’t keep up the illusion of herself at the lab because she was too far away, and that’s when she *wasn’t* actively bleeding out.
- Been thinking about the implications of Mike literally being the one to build the bomb that kills El, and what that is supposed to mean. If El isn’t actually dead/the story didn’t actually end like that, it’s another depiction of Mike being the reason that his relationship with El doesn’t work. ⟶ They can’t have their happily ever after because Mike doesn’t want that, so he’ll always end up destroying it somehow.
  - Also the fact that Mike built that bomb is never addressed. If he really loved her and was so torn up over her death, it would make sense that there would be some kind of guilt attached there.
- This vision of El also does make sense if you consider it portraying Mike’s fear not just as losing El but as losing someone important to him because he wasn’t able to stop them or do something about it. The whole time he’s pleading with her not to do this but she does it anyway. He probably sees this as another example of how he lets down the people in his life.
- In TFS, Henry says “It’s bad luck not to finish a song. It doesn’t have to be sad. You never know the ending until it’s all sung through.” in his role in Joyce’s play, and Patty responds, “Then let’s make it a gay one.”
  - The bomb that destroys the UD is rigged with a record but the bomb detonates before the song finishes.
  - Also why were we listening to Purple Rain when Robin and Mike were fighting over the song choices and didn’t mention that one at all?

Harry Potter Parallels

- Will = Harry. Done.

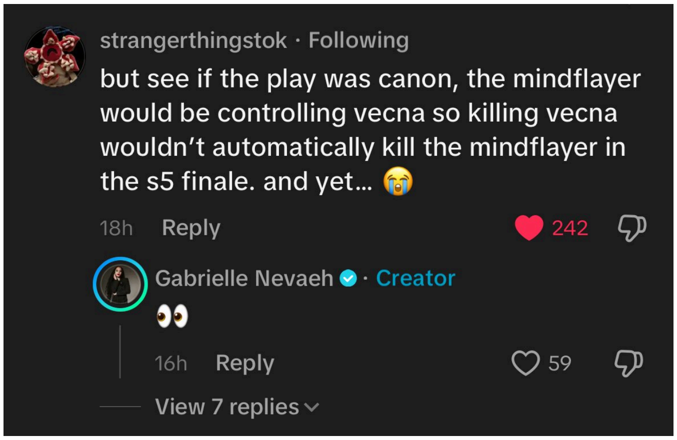
~~Screaming.~~

- Vecna = Voldemort (obviously).

  - Which also means that Henry Creel = Tom Riddle.

    - Thinking about the scene where Holly asks how Henry knew her favorite something (favorite food?), and Henry says something like it was a guess or a hunch or idk I have to go check the wording & in HP6 when Prof Slughorn asks how Tom knew about his favorite food and Tom replies, “Intuition.”
- Harry’s scar hurts when he’s near Voldemort. Will feels pain when he’s close to the hive mind while it’s being attacked.
- Harry & Ron meeting on Day 1 of Hogwarts. Mike & Will meet on Day 1 of kindergarten.
- Karen Wheeler: “Stay away from my daughter.” Molly Weasley: “Not my daughter, you bitch.”
- Anyways, HP6 has a whole arc about reliving memories and realizing that memories have been tampered with.
- “You’re the weak one, and you’ll never know love or friendship, and I feel sorry for you.”

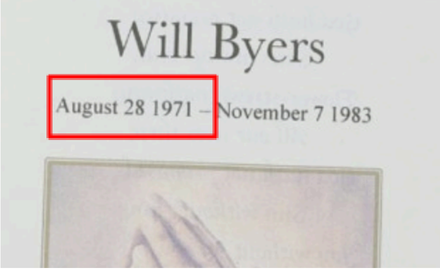
- Harry sees Mr. Weasley being attacked and he lives because of it vs. Will sees the demos going to the Wheelers house and Ted/Karen live because of it.
- Voldemort’s whole shtick or whatever is that he can’t be killed because there are pieces of himself that are living on in other things, so those things need to be killed first before Voldemort can truly be killed. ⟶ “If the brain dies, the body dies.” Vecna was killed but Vecna wasn’t the brain. The Mind Flayer was.

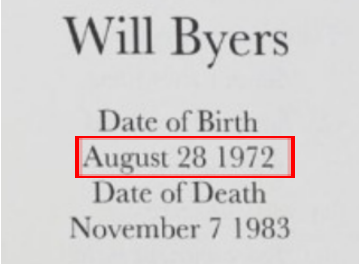


  - Also, Harry ended up being a horcrux. Will has some MF still in him or some kind of other connection between him & Henry/Vecna.
  - This is why I predicted a fake-out death or almost death or temporary death or WHATEVER death for Will before S5 came out. I still think that will happen.
- Anyways, Vecna isn’t dead.

Birthdaygate

- Will’s birthday is listed as Aug 28, 1971 on his funeral program but his birthday in the show was verbally stated to be March 22 (as we already know).
- Henry’s birthday is March 22.
- This would also explain why no one remembered Will’s birthday in S4, because it wasn’t *actually* his birthday.
- The year on the *inside* of the program is wrong though. It says 1972. ⟶ This also lines up with why Joyce says Will was taken at 11 years old, not 12.





- BROOOOOOOOOOOOO

Matthew Modine › Date of birth

March 22, 1959

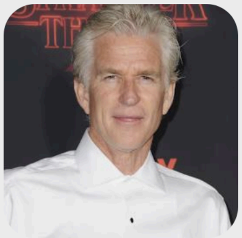


Image: Jon Kopaloff, FilmMagic

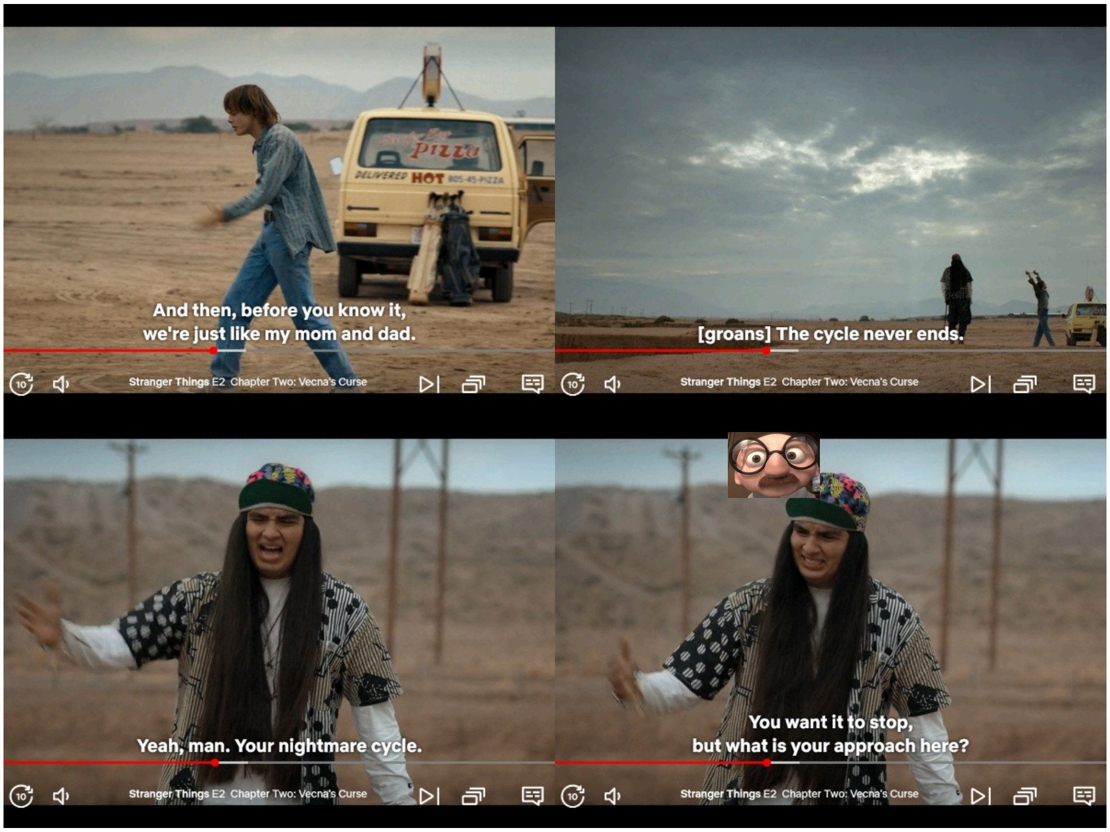
Conformity: The Nightmare Cycle

- In 4.01, Eddie says, "It's **forced conformity.** That's what's killing the kids." → The epilogue is basically just shot after shot of everyone conforming to social norms combined with more strange inconsistencies.
- Baseball is a symbol of forced conformity. → Baseball was what Jonathan used as an example of "normal things" in 1.01 when Lonnie was supposed to take Will to a baseball game but then never showed up.
    - "You shouldn't like things just because people tell you you're supposed to."
    - In Mike's dorm room, there's also a baseball glove even though Mike has never once been associated with any kind of sport or physical activity in general.

- People in the epilogue hit The Henry Pose™ again, including everyone at the graduation, even the people in the back. → Camazotz is also depicted as a setting where everyone behaves and acts the same way.

- Mike and Nancy end up looking a lot like their parents ⟶ Becoming their parents was something they both actively feared and never wanted.

- S4 equates a “Nightmare Cycle” to Jonathan ending up like his parents. ⟶ This whole conversation stems from Jonathan not being able to tell Nancy the truth. (Original post)



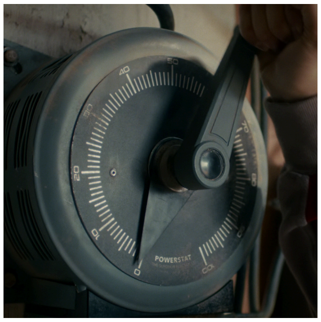
- Hopper says to Jonathan about the curtain falling, "It's not the Godfather." → The Godfather is a movie that ended with the main character, Michael, turning into his father (i.e. he takes over the family business, the literal mafia) even though he never wanted to do that.
    - Also this is an absolutely INSANE reference to make in this context because the plot of the Godfather is LITERALLY about Michael not wanting to get involved in the mafia like his father wants because he doesn't want to get caught in "a cycle of violence and betrayal."
    - As Jonathan is fixing the curtain, Hopper is yelling at him, "You get one more take! You get one more take!" - One more take, as in one more chance for a finale?
- Nancy takes a job at the **Boston Herald**, a newspaper that has always been extremely conservative. → Why wouldn't she want to work at the **Globe** which would be the liberal equivalent?
    - She says, "I thought I'd get out there and **try the real world**." & She smiles at Jonathan when she says this as if she's saying to him now, "I decided to take a walk in your shoes." → Recall in 3.04 when they're fighting after getting fired from the Hawkins post, Jonathan is angry with her and tells her, "The real world sucks. Deal with it like the rest of us."
    - Jonathan tells her that the real world is unpleasant and something you have to "deal with," not really something you learn and grow from voluntarily. → It's really harsh when he says that to her, but… Now it's like a happy memory of a regular conversation they had?

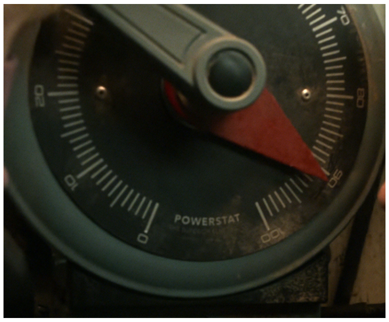
- 2.06: Max says that she never wants to turn into her brother + 2.08: Billy says that he breaks things when he gets angry ⟶ Max gets mad at the end of Mike's campaign and breaks a bunch of stuff [(video link here).]
    - Also, Will is shown smoking and drinking at a bar. ⟶ In 5.03, he gets on Joyce's case about smoking, and Lonnie suffers from substance use disorder, specifically with alcohol. He also is wearing a leather jacket in that scene like Lonnie.
    - Another situation of this "happy ending" not actually showing the characters experiencing the kind of life they wanted…
- Mike (and Nancy & Karen) actually also looks like Henry in the epilogue.

Rockin' Robin

- Robin knows way too much, and also influenced the plot way too much for it to simply be passed off as critical thinking and "good at figuring it out"
- The song **"Rockin' Robin"** by Bobby Day and Michael Jackson is a happy, upbeat tune about a bird singing in the trees all day. The inspiration for the song didn't come from a robin though. Leon Rene actually went to Bobby Day with the idea for the song after his wife kept complaining about a bird that was singing at night and kept her from sleeping. ⟶ "**The culprit was actually a mockingbird, by the way, and not a robin.**" (Source.)
    - A mockingbird can make itself sound like a robin even though it's not actually a robin…
    - Mockingbirds are part of the family *Mimidae* which means "mimic" or "imitator."

- Mockingbirds are grey while robins are red.
    - The dial is used to increase the voltage at the radio tower, which we saw was able to expel the MF away because it's basically like heat. → When the dial is at 0 (no electricity/heat), the arrow is grey. When the dial is cranked up to 100kW (an incredibly dangerous amount of electricity/heat), the arrow is red.
    - Does this make sense? Idk how to explain this any better. I hope it makes sense.





    - The poster for 5.05 displays that dial like it's a paid actor along with Robin's face. → Why would Robin be the character to highlight in this poster? (Maybe I just don't remember the episode well enough but I don't recall her doing anything that significant that would make her stand out over other characters.)
- The funny thing about this is that mockingbirds are also symbols of innocence or people who were wrongly targeted by prejudice or evil. → Thinking of *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee.
- The other funny thing is that in some Native American languages, the word mockingbird means someone who talks too much, a **blabbermouth**. → When S5 first aired, a lot of the GA seemed to be annoyed with Robin's personality as being louder, more clumsy, and lacking social cues, while others understood this as Robin's character being autism-coded.
    - This louder personality she had in S5 showed how she felt more comfortable around her peers and didn't have to mask her behaviors anymore, aka she didn't have to mimic the other people around her just to fit in.
    - If anything, it seems like a mockingbird is more symbolic of Robin's character than an actual Robin would be, and using the song "Rockin' Robin" as *her* song further supports that.
- A robin represents hope, good fortune, and the promise of new beginnings. But Robin isn't a robin, she's a mockingbird…

- Mike tells Will that he might be able to tap into Vecna's powers but Robin's Tammy speech gives Will that final push to find the means to actually do it.
    - Robin is the one who put the idea of "Tammy" in Will's mind, basically being the reason that Will reduces his love for Mike to a simple crush.
    - In the coming out scene, Will explicitly refers to his crush as being "just his Tammy" but Robin and Will (and Steve) are the only ones who actually know what that means.
    - Robin is also the one who convinced Will to come out to everyone (well, "someone" which then turned into everyone).

- Henry gives Holly the tape with the song “I think we’re along now” and she says, “How did you know?” implying that she never told anyone that she loves that song.
    - How does Robin also know Holly’s favorite song?

Other Inconsistencies & Plot Holes

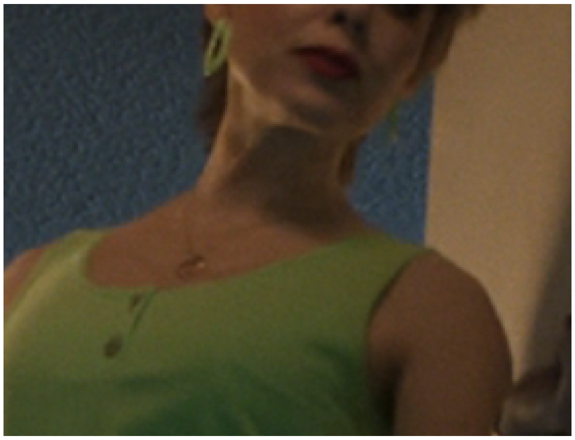
- In 5.04 Robin gets uncomfortable talking about “dick.” Mike is there and is visibly confused. → In 5.07 Robin shamelessly makes a dick joke. Mike is also there but is barely phased this time.
    - In Mike’s mind, Robin has no problem making dick jokes.

- In 5.05 Kali bleeds from the right side of her nose when it has ALWAYS been the left side.
- When the group is climbing the tower in 5.08 around ~15:00, Mike is seen climbing to the top twice in a row.
- The epilogue is supposed to be 18 months after S5 ends. → S5 took place in the fall, meaning the epilogue would be in the late spring/early summer (let’s say June). They’re also literally graduating. High school graduations in the US happen in June.
    - So why does it look like fall in Hawkins?

  - **Why is Mike wearing long-sleeves in June in the mid-western US?** Hopper is also in long-sleeves which we saw him wearing in S1&2 which took place in the fall, but in S3 which was in the summer, he had a short-sleeve uniform.
    - In fact, everyone is wearing long-sleeves and pants for the most part. Even those wearing short sleeves are still wearing pants or jeans, something typical for fall weather in Indiana but not for summer.

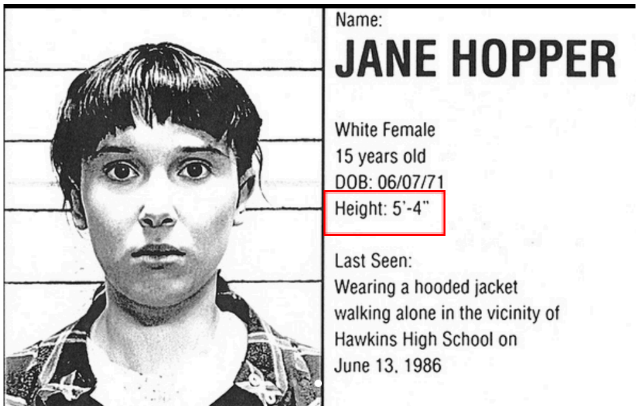
    - The average temperature in early June in Indiana would be around 78°F to 84°F (25.5°C to 29°C) → definitely NOT jeans and long-sleeves weather. ~~I have never once in my life felt the desire to look up average temperatures in Indiana but here I am now.~~
  - How does it make sense that this show went from being so meticulous and careful in their decisions that they actually had actors chewing ice during the S3 finale to keep their breath from showing because they were filming summer scenes in November to now not even caring to edit out the fall foliage in the epilogue?
- Steve is a baseball coach but he played basketball & was a swimmer. → Through Vecna's eyes, Steve was always seen with a baseball bat.
- Hopper was able to get his job back as chief after everyone thought he was dead. → …How?
- On the door in Mike's basement, the doorknob was switched to the other side.

- Joyce and Hopper are at Enzo's, a super fancy restaurant, and they're wearing simple clothes → the same clothes that Vecna saw them in when he looked into Will's memories.
    - The meal they eat is not the same as the one they talk about in S4 (lasagna, breadsticks, and a nice bottle of Chianti). → Instead they ordered what a child/teen might think of as a fancy meal (caviar and steak).
        - Mike or Will never would have known that info about the meal choice because it was said in the church hideout in Russia.
- Vickie isn't in the epilogue possibly because Mike doesn't know that she and Robin were dating so Vecna wouldn't know about that either. That could also be why Robin seems off in her outfit as well, appearing more feminine with long hair rather than her quirky, masc. clothes because Mike doesn't know she is gay, or in general just doesn't know her well enough to know what she would or wouldn't wear.
- Everyone cheered during Dustin's graduation speech when he showed off the new Hellfire shirt. → Why would they cheer for that when they all thought the Hellfire club was responsible for four murders and an earthquake 3 years before?
- Epilogue Boyfriend™ is named Carlton → Will and Carlton are the names of the **cousins** in The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air.
    - "This is a story all about how my life got flipped, turned UPSIDE DOWN."
    - Recall in 1.04 that Mike told Mr. Clarke that El (his supposed romantic interest) was his **cousin**, too.
- Steve in the epilogue drives a Chevy now even though he was always obsessed with his beamer (slang for a BMW).
- When Karen calls down to Mike, she's missing one of her scars, the one on her neck, that we saw in the graduation scene. (It could just be hard to see because of the shadow but I'm not so sure.)
    - I've also seen people say that the scars have been mirrored here, so they're still there but just facing the other way.

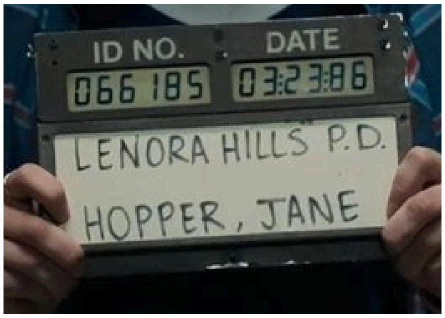


- Dr. Brenner is supposedly a really horrible artist but he also drew all these elaborate drawings and notes about the exotic matter.

- If the UD is just a wormhole that leads to Dimension X, and outside of the wormhole is the Abyss, and inside the wormhole is just Hawkins… **How & when did the Russians learn about the UD?** How were they able to try to access the UD from Russia? How did they get Mind Flayer particles and Demogorgons in Russia?
  - If the UD was actually created by Brenner just for the sole purpose of reaching Henry, how did the Russians find out about it, and why would they even care about it?
  - Do the Russians even know who Henry is? Was that their goal too? Or was their goal about reaching the Mind Flayer and harnessing the power of an interdimensional weapon? In which case that would bring me back to my original question, how did they even learn about it in the first place if it's a Hawkins-specific thing?
- Finn was given the painting from Will in one of the promotional series that Netflix did where they had cast members react to certain props. → the painting then wasn't mentioned AT ALL in S5 until we briefly saw it in the epilogue.
  - They also gave Noah the demogorgon piece from the first episode.
  - As wrap gifts, the Duffers gave Finn the demo piece, and they gave Noah the painting.
  - **Finn talked about how the van scene (i.e. the painting) would pay off.** Again, nothing happened. → The Duffers proved they can bring things full circle when Jonathan brought up how he lied on his college apps.
- El's Wanted poster says she is 5'4" but she is very clearly measured at 5'6" in 4.03. (Apparently Millie is 5'3" so I'm just confused all around here.)



- El's mug shot in the show has the date March 23, as it should be, but in a BTS photo, the date actually says March 21.



- The **Wheeler** Resolution: Senate Resolution 294, Limitation of Power of Radio Broadcast Stations. ⟶ Recommended that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) fix the maximum power used by AM radio broadcasting stations at **50,000 watts,** adopted on June 13, 1938.
    - As this post states, it's very unusual for a station like the WSQK that's supposed to serve a small town in Indiana to be functioning on 50,000 watts.
    - Also considering that the WSQK regularly loses signal or has trouble with signal interference in the show. ⟶ A 50kW radio station is able to cover a distance of 50-100 miles (varying based on location and other signals in the area) during the day. It's so powerful that it can cover international distances at night when signal traffic is lower.
    - Local stations typically operate at about 250W, and regional stations typically at 5,000W. (Source.)

Set Designs

Props & Costumes

- **Chess** imagery throughout the show as if Vecna is manipulating/moving everyone like pieces on a chess board. ⟶ We've seen Henry playing Chess before with El in the lab in S4, with a close-up view of Henry moving the knight.
    - Mike refers to himself as a paladin, aka a knight, but also everyone starts referring to Lucas as a knight in S5. #venkmangate

- Other moments in S5 with Chess imagery:
  - Chess pieces next to Robin in 5.01; chess board in the Creel House in 5.05; chess-like floor in the WSQK, but it's specifically highlighted in 5.07. → Also note everyone hitting the Henry Pose™ in that scene.

  - Lucas says "that's endgame" when talking about their plans at some point. Endgame was originally a chess term, specifically used to refer to the moment in the game where the number of pieces on the board has dramatically decreased, meaning the game will be ending soon.
  -

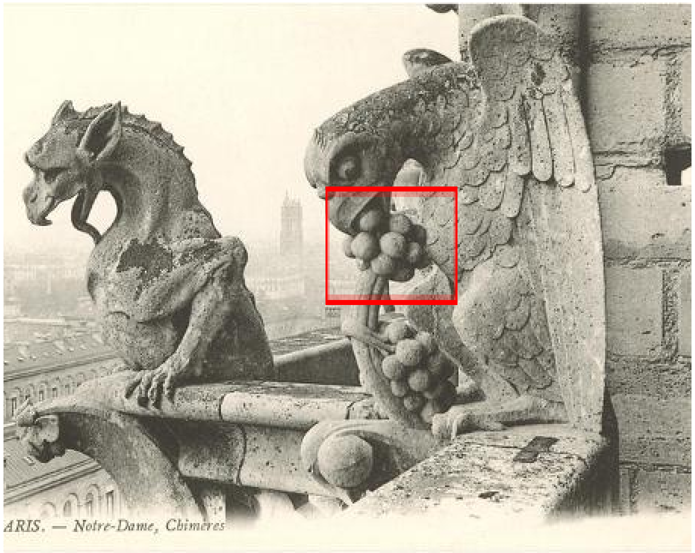
- The order of the D&D books is changed in the show compared to what we see in BTS photos. → Will's book is purposefully placed next to Mike's in the show. In this photo, Will's book is in the middle.
    - Starting from the X in Max's name, the letters spell out "X a lie." (^Recall that one shot of Will where his face is circled and the X is placed over his heart.)
    - X marks the spot but X is a lie → M marks the spot, aka we were so focused on Will that Mike slipped through the cracks.

    - People also pointed out this possible message when you put both images side-by-side: **Act II is a lie.**

- Hey Mike, why do you have a picture of the chimeras from Notre Dame de Paris clipped to your DM book? ~~Also Lucas' face here I just can't~~

- At first I thought these were the gargoyles of Ravenloft Castle which would make sense for their campaign because that’s where Strahd lives (more under D&D - Strahd Von Zarovich) but these look very different from those gargoyles.

- Actually what they look like are the chimeras of Notre Dame except with a few differences, particularly with the one on the right which is named the “Eagle Eating Grapes.” It’s basically the exact same photo, just without the grapes.
    - These were designed by my man Eugène Viollet-le-Duc. (Source.) → Let’s move past the fact that Viollet means **violet** in French.



- Interesting because gargoyles (& chimeras) on Notre Dame and other cathedrals were put there to collect rainwater like a drain & gutter system to prevent it from ruining the structure. → UD is known to not have any water in it, and here we have symbols of keeping water away…
- But also the Eagle Eating Grapes isn’t a gargoyle, it’s a chimera, meaning it’s not designed to steer water away. It’s purely decorative.
    - The eagle symbolically represents spiritual insight because the eagle can see the farthest of any bird.

            - The grapes, being food and also used to make wine, are a classic symbol of spiritual nourishment.
                - The fact that the grapes are missing from this photo means we have this animal poised to be eating something but with nothing to eat, which is a classic Gothic symbol of **longing without resolution.** (Source.) → Something is incomplete even though the set-up is there.
                - ~~Fucking insane.~~
                - Grapes also grow on **vines**. Just had to throw that in there.
                - …Grapes are purple. (Idek if that's related, just makes me laugh.)
        - Eagles are also related to the Truman Show because there's one carved into the boat that Truman uses to escape the fake world at one point. There's an eagle on the WSQK van too.

- Someone in the graduation crowd is holding a yellow poster board with nothing written on it. → This post makes the connection to an episode of Mr. Rogers where he has a yellow post-it note with a "secret message" written on it in invisible ink.

Episode 1600

Topic: Secrets
Air Date: November 25, 1988
Previous Episode: 1599 - Secrets
Next Episode: 1601 - Fun & Games
Purchase/Stream: Amazon

Mister Rogers finds a clipboard on his porch with a small piece of paper that says "read this note" but the rest of the paper is blank. Assuming that the note is written with invisible ink like he used a few days eariler, Mister Rogers desiphers the message to find that Mr. McFeely will be making a delivery very soon. Promptly, Mr. McFeely arrives with a film about how people make suitcases. After watching the film, Mister Rogers sings *Many Ways to Say I Love You*.

In the Neighborhood of Make-Believe, Neighbor Aber explains to Lady Elaine that the balloon ring he gave to her does not mean that they are to get married. After the confusion has settled, Neighbor Aber invites everyone to Westwood for the opening of the new sandbox. Before everyone leaves, Queen Ida plays a song on her accordion and invites Lady Elaine to join her for a duet. Mayor Maggie arrives at the castle and announces an open invitation to the new sandbox as well as her plans to establish a museum of secrets which she would like Lady Elaine to oversee.

Back at the house, Mister Rogers hears an alarm coming from the suitcase Mr. McFeely delivered with the film. Opening the suitcase, Mister Rogers finds a note from Mr. McFeely instructing him to sing the Good Feeling song, change out of his sweater, and go out the front door. Following the instructions, Mister Rogers is surprised to find that many of his neighbors are waiting outside to celebrate his birthday. The group sings a Happy Birthday song to Mister Rogers before he blows out the candle and wishes that everyone knows how special they are to him. His gift includes a small slide viewer which displays photos of many of his friends. Together, everyone closes by singing *It's Such a Good Feeling*.

- In every shot of the main party, there is a person wearing glasses sitting directly behind their left shoulder. (Original video.)→ Having that many people in a crowd who need glasses isn't impossible but it is very unlikely to happen.
  - Everyone except Mike. → Everyone else is part of the illusion that Mike is seeing.

- Robin’s headset doesn’t have any wires or anything. I don’t think I need to mention that bluetooth headphones didn’t exist in the 80s. ⟶ We do see the wire on those same headphones in 5.01 though.

- The Whatzit game appears several times in people’s houses, including Hopper’s cabin and also Mike’s basement. ⟶ They’re always spotted whenever Will is in the room, or behind Will.

- The engagement ring that Hopper gives to Joyce is the same one that Jonathan was going to give to Nancy.
- Max’s skateboard in the epilogue is the Variflex Twisted Skateboard, a brand that was well-known for their skateboards in the 70s and early 80s but then hit a sharp decline in quality around 1982 because of mass-marketing. Those boards were then often seen in toy stores as “starter boards” but then even those weren’t selling due to the poor quality. (Source.) ⟶ If Max is an expert skateboarder, why would she be using one with such a poor reputation for its quality or one that’s considered a “starter board?”
    - In the ending credits, the skateboard shown is a Madrid which makes a lot more sense for her because that’s a California brand of skateboard modeled after surfboards. (Source.) ⟶ This also goes along with how we see Max surfskating: a style of skateboarding that started in California as a way for surfers to practice their form on land.

    - Max even has a Madrid skateboard when we first see her in 2.01, so the new question is: why would Max switch brands from a reputable California brand to a cheap, generic one?

- MAX'S VANS ARE GREY NOW INSTEAD OF GREEN.

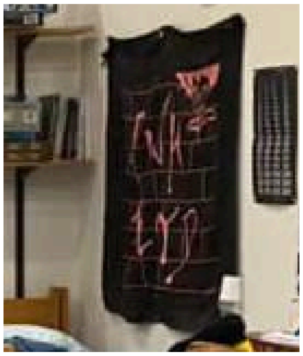
- Mike is typing on a blank sheet of paper.

- Dustin's new hellfire shirt has a new design in the epilogue, including two d20s with the numbers 11 and 5. → In Back to the Future, the Doc says he invented time travel on Nov 5, 1955. (Original post.)
    - Nov 6 (one day later) is significant for Will but also for Henry.
        - Will - the Vecna kidnaps him and takes him to the UD.
        - Henry - the day Brenner kidnaps him and takes him to Hawkins Lab.

- This poster behind Mike that seems to say "Wow Heiser." ⟶ **Michael S. Heiser** was an author most famous for his idea of the **Unseen Realm**: a supernatural worldview where God governs a Divine Council (lesser gods/spirit beings) that carries out His will. (Source.)

  - Kind of sounds like how they described the Mind Flayer right? "He wants to conquer us."
  - The Unseen Realm is described as a world parallel to ours but many of us live unaware of it. ⟶ Not to mention how the Unseen Realm is a parallel to how they described the UD in S1&2: the veil of shadows.
  - The bible says ~~never thought I'd see the day where I'd actually use the words "the bible says"~~ that "there is an unseen realm built by **fear** and there is one built by **faith**; both are spiritual."
    - "I believe" ⟶ a symbol of faith.
      - The party repeating these words several times also feels like an eerie callback to the kids chanting "Back to the light."
    - Meanwhile, Mike's fear has always been ending up like his parents and the idea that people won't need him anymore.

    - Heiser's idea of the Divine Council in which God governs the cosmos through a council of divine beings, distinct from angels also reminds me of the Mind Flayer taking over "vessels" that carry out its work. → We never truly understood what the purpose of the children or the vessels really was. Maybe this helps us understand it more.
- A poster for Another Brick in the Wall by Pink Floyd (a song about rejecting forced conformity) is seen behind Mike a few times and also in his dorm room. → Ross highlighted this poster in his instagram post on Day 1 of shooting S5 & the song is also on the WSQK vinyl but was never in the show.

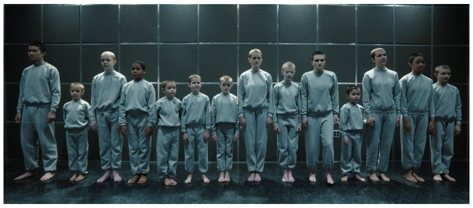


Color Imagery

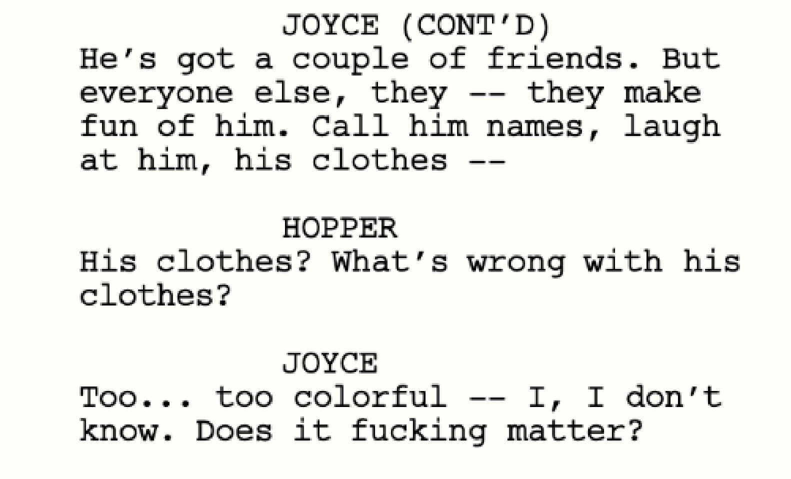
Grey

- Grey can be associated with ambiguity, melancholy, boredom, or even **conformity**. → Some items were changed to grey.
    - Dustin's hellfire shirt.
    - The center of the playground-spinny thingy (idk what it's called). ~~I have been informed that it is called a merry-go-round.I have once again been informed that it is ACTUALLY called a roundabout.~~ Wikipedia has told me that roundabout is British English, we go back to playground-spinny thingy now…
    - Max's vans.
    - This might be a stretch but I can't stop thinking about Halloweentown 2 when the villain casts the grey spell over the town to get rid of the happiness, joy, and magic in the town and turns everything grey.

- Grey is also the color of the clothes that the kids wear in Hawkins Lab, a place where they were **controlled** and **manipulated**. → Henry was one of the people who manipulated those kids, especially El, though it seemed like he was a victim.
    - Hawkins Lab is also very grey in general.



- How could I have fucking forgot the most blatant moment of grey. Will Byers who has always only ever worn colorful outfits. → There's even a line in the original script for 1.01 where Joyce mentions this to Hopper but it wasn't in the final cut.



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                JOYCE (CONT'D)
He's got a couple of friends. But
everyone else, they -- they make
fun of him. Call him names, laugh
at him, his clothes --

                HOPPER
His clothes? What's wrong with his
clothes?

                JOYCE
Too... too colorful -- I, I don't
know. Does it fucking matter?
```

    - It's only once Will starts tapping into his antennae/signal powers and then truly siphoning his powers from Vecna that he now is wearing this grey shirt with a lighter grey undershirt.
    - The shirt has stripes on it though, and what do ya know, two of them are grey but the other two stripes are BLUE. → Something something, even when Will's mind is being taken over by Vecna, Mike is still able to reach him/is still "connected" to him somehow.

  - The only other time I can recall Will wearing a grey shirt is his pajama shirt in 2.04 to 2.06 when he is possessed by the MF.
- This interview that the cast did with Time Magazine where they were all wearing grey also hits so differently now. → Everyone except Caleb who seems to be in white. (Or maybe just a really light grey, I can't tell.)
  - "My finale was different than everyone else's." #venkmangate

Orange

- In **Mad Max: Fury Road,** orange is the color of **desolation**. "Barren, hopeless, and endless, the Mars-like texture truly sends the audience to another world as chaos ensues."
  - Orange is the color of the desert, of a long stretch of dry, desperate land. Near infertile, **no life can survive here**, **a world dried up and dying**. (Source.)
  - In Mad Max: Fury Road…
  - In Mad Max…
  - In **Mad Max.**
  - **IN MAD MAX**.
- Orange can be associated with signaling something hazardous or requiring caution.
  - Traffic cones; construction worker vests; caution tape (sometimes).
  - Hopper was one of the soldiers who worked with Agent Orange in Vietnam, and we know how this led to his daughter developing cancer and dying.

- Henry is often associated with the color orange as well.

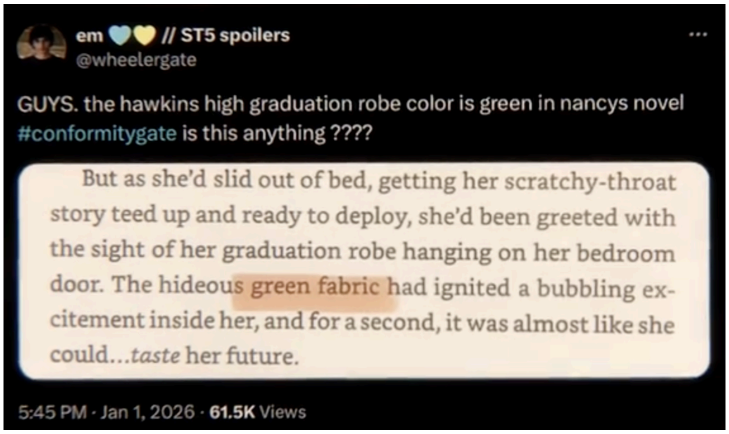
- There are quite a lot of moments where orange starts to pop up when it never really has in the show before, or colors of certain things are changed to orange.
  - Will's orange hoodie in 5.07 & 5.08.
  - The graduation robes.
  - In the final battle plans, titles and steps are outlined in orange.
  - Orange curtains at the WSQK.
  - In the latest promotional photoshoot, Finn is wearing a sweater vest with prominent orange stripes. (More about this sweater later on.)
  - Mike's basement rug changes from blue to orange.

  - Dimension X feels quite… orange.

- Dustin's final shirt in the epilogue is also orange which always felt very strange to me and I couldn't place why. ⟶ What if Dustin (and maybe even Steve) dies in the actual finale?
  - "You die. I die."
  - Robin tells Steve that he "smells really bad. Like really bad." + Derek says at the very end "It smells like rotten pizza" while sitting in the same seat that Dustin was sitting before ⟶ the smell of a **rotting** dead body is really difficult to escape…
  - In 2.02, when the pumpkins are rotting, Office Callahan says "it smells like a nursing home." ⟶ In Will's coming out scene, he says Mike's basement has an old-person smell.

- Also trying to decipher these roman numerals on Dustin's shirt—MCCCLXXXIII—which spells out "1493" but in the pre-standardized roman numeral format.
    - So idk about 1*49*3 but 1*94*3 is when the USS Eldridge enters Dimension X for the first time…
    - 1493 is also when Columbus returned to Spain from the Americas and reported on his "new world" discoveries.

- Nancy's book specifically mentions the graduation robes being green.



- Orange is also the well-known color of prisoner uniforms. Not sure if that really matters but that was my very first thought when I saw them in their robes. ("Jeez they look like prisoners" is exactly what I said out loud.)
    - When the party is standing together, Lucas is the only one with his robe still zipped shut. There is speculation about how that could point to a dark end for Lucas. (i.e. he's trapped as a prisoner or in other words, he dies.)
        - Caleb made a joke in an interview about how "his finale is different from everyone else's."
        - There are parallels between Mike & Lucas in general. #venkmangate

- In 5.05, Steve plays with a rubik's cube in the lab in the UD and turns an entire side to yellow with some spots of orange in it.
  - Yellow = Will, orange = Henry ⟶ Will's mind is being infiltrated by Henry.

- On Mike's D&D book, there is a large "M" that is half-filled with orange, while on Will's book, it is the same letter but flipped upside down (obviously because it's a "W") and fully filled with orange.
  - Dustin, Lucas, and Max's books don't have orange like that on their books.

  - The shape of the cave opening in Henry's mind looks like the top of half of the M on Mike's d&d book in the epilogue, which is also the half that's filled in with orange. ⟶ "M marks the spot."

    - Also, Mike's "M" is yellow and Will's "W" is blue, pairing them up with each other's respective colors. But Lucas' "L" is green and Dustin's "D" ~~lol~~ is purple.
        - Lucas and Dustin are independent characters.
        - Mike and Will are innately :) linked to each other.
    - On the spines, Dustin's name is in yellow while Will's is in orange even though **yellow is always strongly associated with Will.**

Purple

- We've already established that purple is associated with blindness. → Finn seemed to be wearing different shades of purple during his time on SNL.

- During Hopper's proposal, the lighting outside is blue&purple. → The same lighting that we see outside the WSQK when Max enters her "dream state" in 5.08.

- In the final campaign, Mike says a **purple light** shines before the Mage of St. Markovia emerges.

D&D

Campaign Parallels

- The end of the show seems to parallel Mike's final D&D campaign at the end of S1. The other boys complain that the campaign was too short and didn't make sense.
    - Mike says "**it was 10 hours**." → S5 ended up being about 10 hours long.
    - The other boys start pointing out plot holes and inconsistencies that didn't make sense to them, much like the fans are doing now with the finale.

- The end of the show somehow simultaneously parallels the very first D&D campaign in 1.01. After 10 hours, the campaign was interrupted and they weren't able to finish.
    - Will supposedly gets defeated after rolling a 7 *even though we don't see it actually happen.* → Just like how we're not seeing Mike being Vecna'd.
    - Will gets taken right after that so the story remains unfinished.
    - When Karen interrupts, Mike says, "Mom, we're in the middle of a campaign." To which Karen replies, "You mean the end?"
    - That campaign also ended up being 10 hours long, actually about 10 hours and 20 minutes total since Karen interrupted them at 8:15 + the time it took for the boys to get on their bikes which is when Will tells Mike the outcome of his roll. → **S5 is exactly 10 hours and 20 minutes long.**
- In the final campaign, the party was about to move on after **giving up hope and accepting that they lost TWICE** before winning. → Once at Will's turn right before Dustin suddenly remembers the Mage of St. Markovia, and a second time after Will tries to summon the mage and Mike says "nothing happens."
- In Eddie's campaign, the team thought they killed Vecna at first and Mike yells out that Vecna was killed by Kas, also known as Kas the Betrayer, until Eddie reveals that Vecna is alive and missing his left arm and his left eye.
    - TikTok added an animation to one of their videos where if you type "I believe" into the comments, a d20 pops up and rolls to an 11. → In the last minutes of Eddie's campaign, Dustin rolls an 11 before Erica takes Vecna out with her nat20.
    - In DnD lore, Kas betrays Vecna, tearing out his left arm and one of his eyes before Vecna strikes him down and nearly kills him. → Will rips off Vecna's left arm in the final battle.

Strahd von Zarovich

- The villain in Mike's final D&D campaign is **Strahd von Zarovich who is well-known for his high stats, spellcasting, and regenerative powers making him very difficult to beat.** → It seems like Vecna might be a parallel to Strahd here.
- He likes to use guerilla style tactics and will sometimes not stay for the entire fight, leaving the party to fight smaller minions instead.
    - "At any given point, Strahd might wish to attack more thoroughly, and see how far he can take them. Strahd can be reckless and be less evasive than he should. Even to the point of starting to lose a battle. In fact **he can even lose a battle and eventually be turned to mist.** It doesn't matter, **he can just return to his coffin and reform**. There are several uses for this: First, you get a good fight. Second, **you give the PCs false hope that Strahd is not so difficult to defeat,** when in reality you're just not using him to his full capacity." (Source.)
- The party has to fight Strahd in his castle for it to have a chance of being a final boss battle; otherwise he will use his retreat and regenerate tactic over and over again. → Similar to how the team was able to actually hurt Vecna when he was in the Creel house.

- Strahd is a vampire & one of the tactics used to weaken him is casting sunlight. ⟶ "He likes it cold."
- Strahd's final weapon are his **four red dragons.** ⟶ We see these in Will's painting.
  - These "pillars" that were holding the kids sure looked a lot like dragon heads.
  - The dragons are meant to keep anyone from **exiting** Strahd's domain, they don't care about who enters though… ⟶ the kids never left the "hub" because the dragons wouldn't have let them leave.

- Mike says that Will travels to the town of Vallaki, which in DnD is described as "a fortified settlement in the Domain of Dread known as Barovia." ⟶ Coincidentally, Barovia is the land that Strahd conquers and rules, known to the public as "the devil Strahd." (Source.)
  - "**Barovia was a prison** for its darklord, the vampire Strahd von Zarovich, as well as the entire population of the valley."
- Lore says that the burgomaster of Vallaki forces the inhabitants to hold a festival once a week even though the townsfolk are worried that it would incur the wrath of Strahd. However, "the burgomaster has deluded himself into believing that the only way for Vallaki to escape Barovia and return to the Prime Material plane was for him to make everyone **happy and hopeful.**" (Source.)
- The town is mostly inhabited by humans, but "some of the houses in the town were **infested with rats, who were servants of Strahd**."

- This post talks about the theory that Mike making this mistake is because he has figured out that the world he's living in isn't real. ⟶ Will knows DnD lore inside and out, and he wouldn't have accepted it if Mike made a mistake like saying that Will would be happy in Vallaki because that town is known for creating a sense of false happiness.

False Hydra

- There's a lot of speculation/discussion about what the monster in Will's painting actually is but another possibility is the false hydra. ⟶ a monster known to **manipulate memories and perception to create a false reality.**

  - It can make people forget its existence and the victims it consumes through a psychic song, allowing it to grow by feeding unnoticed in towns, creating an unsettling mystery where characters notice missing people but can't recall who they were or why they're gone.
    - "**Even those closest to the missing won't remember they ever existed.**" (Source) ⟶ i.e. Mike forgetting Will/Will being erased.
  - "The False Hydra's song will cause people to **create new memories to make their new reality logical.**" (Source)
  - "A fight against a False Hydra should feel more like a desperate reckoning than a typical combat encounter. It begins not with swords drawn, but with memory restored." (Source)
  - D&D guides mention **"plugging your ears"** as a start to defeating the False Hydra. (Source) ⟶ Who do we know who often plugs or covers his ears during intense moments?

- ○ "A spell like **True Sight** will allow the caster the ability to see through the hydra's song." (Source) → The party refers to Will's vision powers as True Sight.

Kas the Betrayer

- **Kas the Betrayer** aka Will: Kas is a human who was Vecna's "General" before betraying him, also known as The First Vampire or Kas the Bloody-Handed. (Source.) → Recall in 5.04 when Vecna tells Will that he was the first and that he showed Vecna what was possible.
- The Eye of Vecna and the Hand of Vecna become powerful artifacts that can corrupt anyone who uses them. → The Eye grants truesight to its wearer, and the Hand grants the user supernatural strength, and if attuned to the same creature, **there is a chance that Vecna will eat at the user's soul and take control of that character.** (Source 1. Source 2.)
    - ○ The only way to destroy the Eye and the Hand is to attach them to the same creature and then slay that creature with the Sword of Kas. (Source.)
- The **Sword of Kas** is a sentient longsword that Vecna gifts to Kas, which he uses to attack Vecna in an attempt to usurp him. → The sword in this scenario is Will's powers, which Will uses in 5.05 to try to kill Henry.
    - ○ After that attempt, Will gets knocked out and Vecna has him trapped in the UD (in his mind) where he supposedly forces Will to see all the unpleasant visions he talks about in 5.07. → This also follows DnD lore in which after Kas gets struck down, "he vanishes from the mortal world, said to have ascended—or descended— into the Shadowfell or another forgotten plane."
- The choreographer for a lot of the fight scenes is wearing this shirt in the documentary with **a picture of Will holding his left eye and his left hand looks like Vecna hand covered in blood**, and the words underneath say "Possession… is just the beginning…"

Thirazdun

- References to **Thirazdun**, the god of Eternal Darkness, Decay, Entropy, Malign Knowledge, Insanity, and Cold. ⟶ He created the **Abyss** and was later imprisoned there as punishment.
- It's possible that it's actually Thirazdun behind the evil in the show, we just haven't confirmed that yet. ⟶ We never really did discover Vecna's/the Mind Flayer's goal in all this beyond "take over the world."
- Eternal darkness & decay & cold ⟶ all words used to describe the UD.
- Possibility that the Mind Flayer is actually Thirazdun: an **amorphous, roiling pitch-blackness,** very similar to the concept of the Mind Flayer as a shadow monster.
    - Being imprisoned in the abyss made him go insane and he wasn't able to communicate except in the form of "a shrieking babble that was impossible for mortals to comprehend." ⟶ The shadow Mind Flayer in S2 never actually spoke but was always associated with a sort of shrieking sound of flowing energy.
- In creating the Abyss, Thirazdun "planted a seed of evil in a primordial expanse of the churning Elemental Chaos" and the seed eventually grew into the Abyss. ⟶ Sounds a lot like that's describing the exotic matter which definitely looks like a seed of evil and churning chaos. (Source.)
    - **Thirazdun's symbol is called the Spiral of Decay** and looks a lot like the mandala that Robin and Will stumble upon in 5.02 AND the exotic matter. ⟶ Recall how Robin says mandalas are supposed to be concentric circles and not spirals.

    - Entropy is a fundamental concept in chemistry & thermodynamics that is all about disorder or "chaos" in a system. ⟶ Like the chaos that Dustin talks about in his graduation speech and like the swirling chaos of the exotic matter.
- The **Demiplane of Imprisonment** where Thirazdun is actually held resembles a swollen crystalline cyst that is nearly a mile in diameter that surrounds the demiplane. (Source.) ⟶ Sounds like the flesh wall.
    - Demiplanes are ill-defined extra-dimensional pockets of reality, often like a small, private world created by powerful magic or existing naturally as a fold in the multiverse, accessible through portals. ⟶ The UD is like a small, private version of Hawkins.
    - Demiplanes are usually still in the formation process and somehow unfinished. They can occur naturally or be created by casting the spell **Genesis** which only creates **barren, lifeless demiplanes** in which life has to be added by other means. (Source.) ⟶ It could

be possible that Will was the one who “cast” Genesis and **built** the UD when he was first taken, since we know El banished Henry directly to Dimension X, not the UD.

- Thirazdun’s holy number is 333 aka the angel’s number. ~~That’s ironic.~~
    - The **333 Gems of Thirazdun** are essentially “fragments of his essence” and are one of his artifacts. → These gems are fist-sized stones that enable his scions and servitors to unlock the shackles that bind him in the Abyss.
        - This description resembles the stone that Henry found in the cave.

- In the third edition, Thirazdun’s divine rank is 11 (out of 20).
- Thirazdun’s clerics cannot draw power unless they are in contact with an artifact such as these. (Source.) → Will the Cleric??? And Will also siphons his powers from his proximity to the hive-mind?
    - This also implies that Henry is a “cleric” but since the gem fused to him in the cave, he is *always* in contact and able to siphon Thirazdun’s power.
    - His clerics’ ultimate goal is to free their dark deity from his prison, and they will often conduct foul rituals including human sacrifice. (Source.) → Vecna using human sacrifices to open the gates in S4.
    - His clerics traditionally wear black or **purple robes,** but clerics of his aspect, the Elder Elemental Eye, typically wear **ochre-colored robes.**

*I know there’s a lot of theories going around about El being Thirazdun, I haven’t taken the time to really delve into that one but maybe some time soon.

Beyond the Show

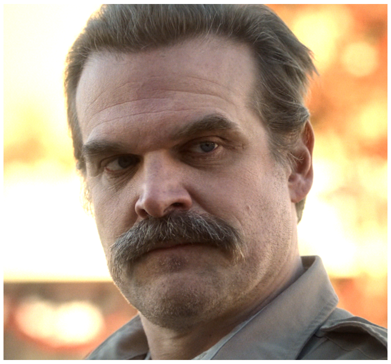
Breaking the Fourth Wall & Other Meta Details

- Lucas looks at the camera when he says "I don't know about you guys but I don't believe in coincidences.”

- This season in particular really hammered in the idea of not having any holes or weak points in plans or ideas. Mike in particular was obsessed with making sure no one thought his plans had any holes in them. → But the season ended with 834 million plot holes.

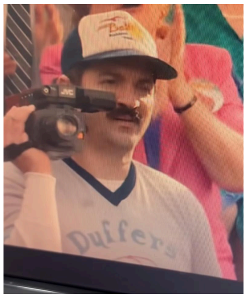
- Finn????

- Everyone thought Joyce was crazy with the Christmas lights in S1, and she ended up being right. Everyone thought Joyce was overreacting about Will's PTSD in S2, and she ended up being right. Everyone thought Joyce was being overdramatic about her magnets in S3, and she ended up being right.
- Throughout the epilogue, many characters look directly at the camera. → The most notable moment for me is when Hopper is talking to Mike around 1:30:35, he's seen looking at Mike one moment and then looking at the camera the next.
    - These two shots are taken a split-second apart, you literally SEE his eyeline shift towards the camera.



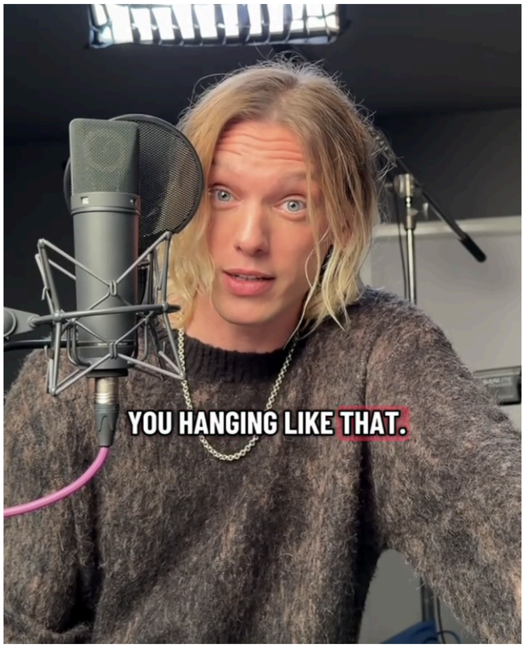
- Several moments in vol.2 & 5.08 when the characters are saying something to the effect of "This isn't real."
    - The first thing Mike says in his vision of El is "You have to get out of there. You have to get out."
    - Holly - "Everything you see, none of it is real."
    - El - "This is just an illusion. This isn't real."
    - Joyce - "Whatever he showed you, it's not real. He plays tricks, he lies."
    - El - "Henry lied to you. He tricked you. He used you, and you fell for it."
    - **Lucas - "Is this real? Is Vecna messing with us again?"**
        - This whole twitter post is about that particular scene where Lucas and Robin are theorizing about Vecna messing with our heads & being in a trance.
    - When talking about how there aren't any vines or monsters in Dimension X, Dustin says, **"We don't know what's going on in the mind."**
        - How interesting because they've never once shortened mind flayer or hive mind to just "mind." → Do they mean Mike's mind?
    - After escaping the UD in 5.07, Hopper says, "It feels like there's a missing piece of the puzzle. A big piece."
- The video game Derek was playing in one of the episodes, named "Ghouls 'n Ghosts" has **a fake ending that tells its players that everything was an illusion** and that through the second time of playing is when the players get the real ending. (Original post.)
- Playing 5.08 in theaters further adds to the notion that this finale was a theatrical or "make-believe" performance. Netflix even refers to it as the "Stranger Things Series Finale **Theatrical Event.**" (Source.)

- The Duffers pushed really hard to get Netflix to let them show the episode in theaters, even after getting denied at first, but they didn't make ANY extra profit from it. (Source)
- "The move to screen the final episode of the hit series in theaters on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day turned into a big boon to theater owners due to an unusual arrangement of selling concession vouchers rather than actual tickets. That was because of complex contractual limitations with the show's actors and creators on streaming-to-cinema deals. **The result was that all the proceeds of the voucher sales went to the theaters, rather than being split with Netflix.**"
- Other moments in 5.08 also hint at the idea that what we're seeing is like a play or something that isn't real. (Original post.)
    - Mike says he can't "walk the [graduation] stage."
    - Nancy says she wants to get out into the "real world."
    - Hopper says that moving to Montauk could be "something real."
    - Dustin says "That's not who I am. That's not who any of us are." in his graduation speech.
    - Even El's suicide looks like curtains closing on a play.
- The finale has a slightly different intro theme and title animation.
- Being tricked to watch a fake play within a play is literally the plot of First Shadow.
- Murray's speech in 2.05 uses the metaphor of "looking behind the curtain" to explain how people will accept what's given to them because they're too afraid to look deeper and find something they didn't want to find.
    - "People don't spend their lives trying to get a look at what's behind the curtain. They like the curtain. It provides them stability, comfort, definition."
    - Right before he says that, Nancy says that because Dr. Owens admits to "killing Barbara" on tape that they would be able to incriminate him, and Murray tells her that she's being naive in thinking that. → Like how the majority of fans take what the Duffers say at face value without looking further but they shouldn't.
    - This parallel between Nancy & Murray's news story arc in S2 and creating Nancy & Jonathan's goo room in the documentary.
- The epilogue shows video cameras pointing somewhat towards the audience.



- Also…

- JCB promotes The Trials: Winter Solstice on Quinn in this video. → I don't understand how this can be a totally separate media promotion that still feels like it's about Stranger Things…
    - He says, "Hello everyone." The screen cuts to black with a **heartbeat** in the background. → This feels like a direct reference to the cut to black right before the epilogue starts where we hear a heart beat followed by a ticking clock. (~1:23:30)
    - "So you thought that was it?" Another black screen. Another **heartbeat**.
    - "We wouldn't leave you hanging like that…" with more heart beats.
    - The caption calls it "Quinn-formity gate."
    - Shout out to Jamie's grey sweater.



Cedar Lodge

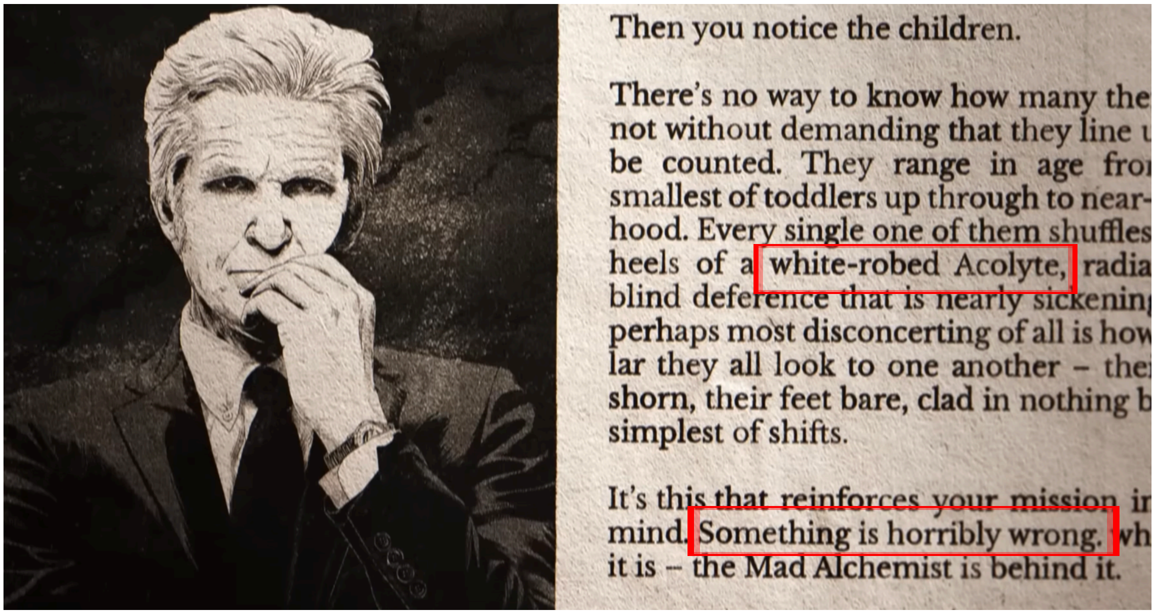
- Cedar Lodge was the production name that was used while filming S5.
- Maya Meissner's *The Cedar Lodge* project tells a disturbing **dream-like story** of her family's close encounter with the Yosemite Killer in the late 1990s through a series of different kinds of photographs.
    - "It's more than just a recounting of events—it's a reckoning with **memory, place, and trauma** on a personal level."

    - In this context, Cedar Lodge can symbolize a "**gateway** between what transpired and what could have been, representing a site of personal reckoning and unsettling memories." ([Source](#).)
- On deciding to collect and publish these photos, Maya said, "I've always used my art to process my feelings." → Similar to how Will uses art to process his feelings?
- "The final visual element we brought into the book was my series of black and white images. These images felt like **memories**, perhaps mine, perhaps the killer's, perhaps the investigator's, perhaps the victims'."
    - On the structure and placement of the photographs: "The **color photographs were like my character's story,** grounded in the present, trying to get closer to what happened in the past." → Similar to the colorful nature of the epilogue.
    - "The black and white images were placed in gate-folds so that **the viewer has to lift up the colorful image to find the dark, more off-putting photo underneath**…it required the viewer to interact more with the work, to **literally uncover the story** like I had for myself in my investigation. ([Source](#).)

- The Yosemite Killer also had **four** confirmed victims. → Same as Vecna (not including the massacre at the lab).
- In general, Cedar holds a lot of divine symbolism in Native American & Egyptian cultures and biblical & islamic contexts.
    - Cedar is often called the "divine wood," symbolizing the link or the "bridge" between Earth and heaven. ([Source](#).)
    - Cedars also produce **purple** cones.

Closing Credits

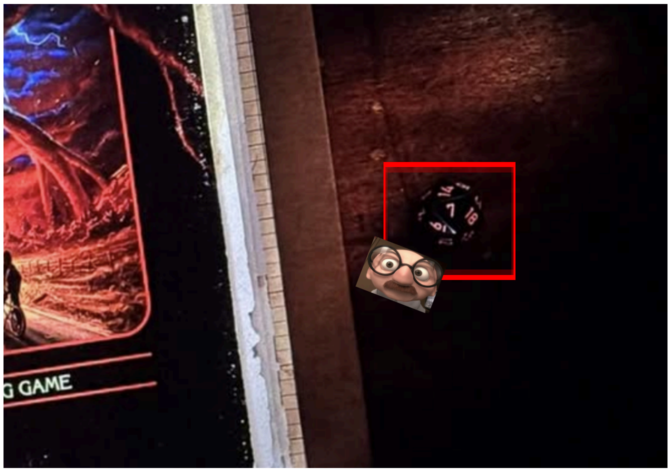
- INCREDIBLE THEORY I just read [here](#) about the music in 5.08 and how we hear a lineup of songs all in that one episode when music wasn't really a big factor in the season, and how it could be because the group is testing songs to wake up Mike. Heroes is used in the closing credits because that's the song that wakes Mike up but we don't see it happen.
- This blurb next to Brenner's picture is actually insane and doesn't match the rest of the shots we see at all. → "Something is horribly wrong."



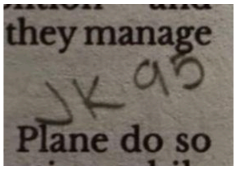
- “Then you notice the children.” ⟶ That’s insanely creepy.
- “The Mad Alchemist is behind it.” ⟶ Who could be the Max Alchemist?
    - Vickie is labeled as an Alchemist, so making some kind of association between Alchemy and medicine, it would make sense for the Mad Alchemist to be Dr. Kay.

- **Blind deference** means accepting someone's decision or belief without critical evaluation, simply because they said so. ⟶ Sounds like the majority of ST fans who don’t believe in CG.
- “A white-robed Acolyte” is a Star Wars reference, why would that be associated with Brenner or with a D&D themed manual?

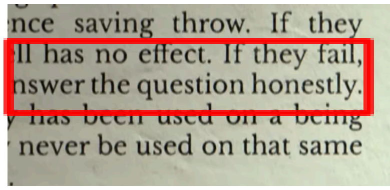
- The very end of the final montage shows the D&D players manual with a very small d20 next to it. ⟶ The number on the die is 7.
    - “It was a 7. The demogorgon, it got me.”



- Guess I gotta say something about the “JK 95” on Sadie’s credit page. → “JK” usually means “Just Kidding” so that would be: “Just kidding, episode 9 season 5.”


they manage
JK 95
Plane do so

- Failing a saving throw leads to the player having to answer a question honestly. → Honesty has always been a pinnacle in the show, but Mike is the only one who’s never really been honest with himself.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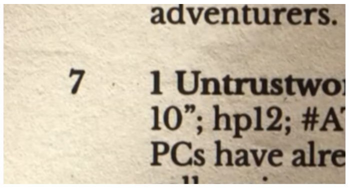
- In a list of attributes for something unknown, #7 says “1 Untrustworthy.”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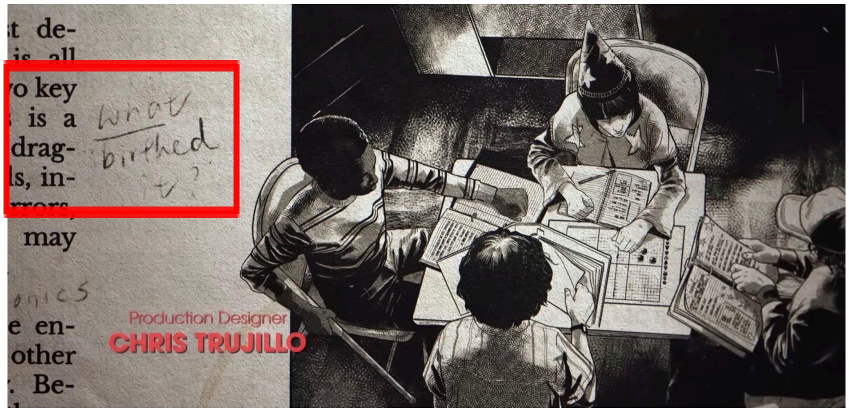
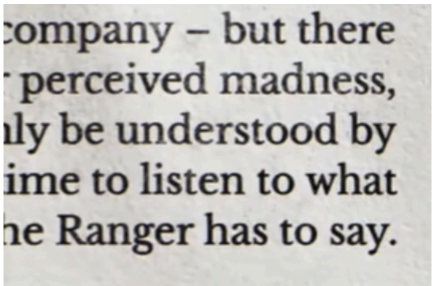
- A couple things that stand out here
  - “What birthed it?” right next to a mention of a key. → Does this have to do with someone’s parents?
  - Some unknown writing, all I can make out is “onics.”

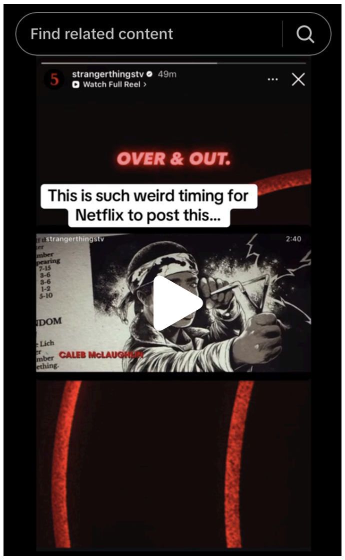


- “Listen to what the **Ranger** has to say.” ⟶ Lucas was the one who convinced Nancy and Mike not to just chalk things up to a coincidence anymore.


company – but there
perceived madness,
ly be understood by
ime to listen to what
he Ranger has to say.

- This post of the final credits with the caption “over and out.” This was posted on the official Stranger Things account on pretty much every platform. ⟶ Over and out isn’t a real phrase that’s used though, despite popular belief. “Over” means you are expecting a reply. “Out” means no reply is needed.
    - People are speculating that this is the last post from any of these accounts. If that were the case, why would the accounts feel the need to pin the posts? If it was the last one, it would always be at the top.

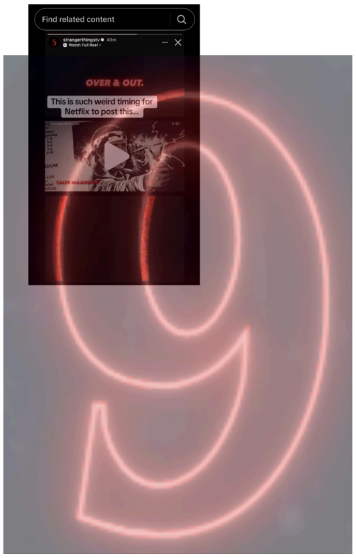
- The background of the video on this instagram post also shows one of the letters or numbers but it doesn't match the shape of the number 5 at all.
    - It could be the "S" but there is no line above it to match. (It could also be the final "S" but that seems so random since the background is stationary.)
    - It could also be an upside down 5 but that doesn't really make sense either since the official banner for S5 never included an upside down 5.
    - **Maybe it's a "9."**



- I went back and checked the original theme to see if it could be an "S" or if there's another letter that matches that shape. → The only "S" shown is for Cara Buono's credit

which is halfway through the theme, and you can see that the shape doesn't match the one in the background.

- ○ I generated a 9 with the official Stranger Things font and overlaid on top ~~because I'm insane and I couldn't let this go~~ and yeah. Yeah yeah.



Behind the Scenes Clips

- This BTS video for 5.08 posted on Instagram with some very questionable decisions on captioning only certain lines of dialogue.
- Caleb says "Sadie look at me" while emphasizing his shirt. ⟶ BUT WHAT'S WEIRD IS THAT IN THE DOCUMENTARY CALEB DOESN'T SAY "**LOOK AT ME**" HE SAYS "**DON'T GET ME.**" ⟶ Thinking back to "Listen to what the ranger has to say."

- The emblem on his shirt matches his shield in the painting.

- Finn says “They were lying” after they finish filming the scene with Mike & El in the void.

- Millie says “You guys can act!” → Unsure what this is about but feels like it would be pointing towards the cast acting something that is really strange or doesn’t make sense.

- Charlie shouts “Mike! Get up here!” which could be referencing the scene on the radio tower where you can see Mike climbing to the top of the stairs **twice**.

- Millie says “It’s been a while!” to Sadie with a hug while filming at the WSQK. ⟶ When El and Max reunited, they didn't even hug, and it seemed like they had already seen each other before this.
    - El says, “You’re really here.” ⟶ As if she saw her recently in the void.

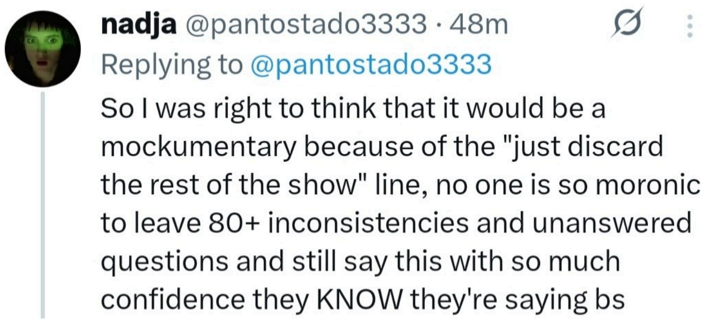
Documentary

Key Moments

- Legendary director Frank Daramont (Shawshank Redemption, The Green Mile, Walking Dead S1&2) says, “Matt and Ross do not write simple scenes.”
- ~43:30, Darabont calls out how in 5.02, the camera passes through the bookshelves of Holly’s classroom to show her reading A Wrinkle in Time, and that this is a parallel to Orson Welles’ Citizen Kane when the camera passes through a neon sign before the scene begins. ⟶ It was an innovative technique at the time because the crew literally had to pull apart the sign in mid-air to allow the camera to pass through and get the shot they wanted.
    - This imagery is also a direct parallel with Interstellar where the bookshelves are used to represent traveling through time and space.

- The interesting thing about this moment in Citizen Kane is that the neon sign represents a thematic window into Susan Alexander's miserable life, and the camera passing through the sign symbolizes the descent into an artificial world.

- Odd moments of dialogue that are explicitly highlighted, but are contradicted by what happens in the finale.
  - "You can't leave anything dangling. You have to wrap everything up."
  - "You have to keep toying with the audience."
  - "The audience will never know that we failed today."
  - "Not that we've ever half-assed anything on this show."
  - "The foundation of the show is built on trust."
  - "You see these shows that people love and adore, and the ending falters, and they just discard the rest of the show." → **This tweet sums up exactly my thoughts on it.**



nadja @pantostado3333 · 48m
Replying to @pantostado3333
So I was right to think that it would be a mockumentary because of the "just discard the rest of the show" line, no one is so moronic to leave 80+ inconsistencies and unanswered questions and still say this with so much confidence they KNOW they're saying bs

    - “Episode 8 is red. Red for red alert.”
    - “They’re faking it really well.”
- Around 13:08 in the documentary, there’s a very weird moment where they’re showing the mechanics behind tipping the Big Buy truck, and there’s a brief shot of the truck with backwards numbers and letters, like the truck has been completely mirrored, and then it cuts to a new shot where the truck is completely normal. → Mirrored isn’t even right, it’s just straight up backwards.
    - If it were mirrored, the order of the letters would still be spatially in the same spot but you see here that the B of Bradley’s is at the back of the truck in the weird photo. Even if it was a mirror image, the **B should still be seen towards the front of the truck,** and because it’s not, it wasn’t some computer glitch or editing error, it means that this truck was actually made to have those words and numbers painted on backwards.
    - We are also looking at two different sides of the truck in these photos but I still don’t understand what explanation there could possibly be for why one side of the truck is backwards and one is normal.

- Matt Duffer wearing this shirt with something blurred out. The only other reason something would need to be blurred out besides spoilers would be explicit language or inappropriate content. → I wouldn't put it past the Duffers to wear something like that but it also seems a bit weird to decide to wear a shirt with explicit language at your job where you're the literal boss, and you know you're being recorded for a documentary…I'm leaning more towards spoiler.

- Diet Dr. Pepper spotted. These men are NOT to be trusted.

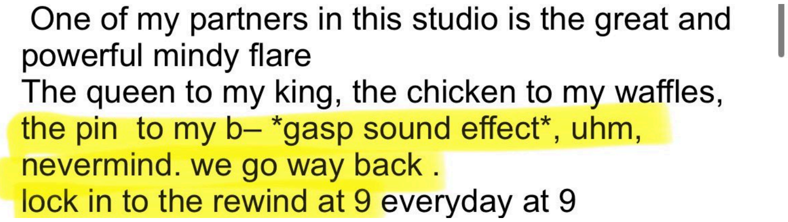
- Honorable mention for Noah & Finn’s matching sweaters.

Pinballgate

- Pinball machines consistently show up throughout the show, and the Duffers also mentioned that they collect pinball machines. → [This post](#) has a great outline of Pinballgate with all the times that pinball shows up in the show and the documentary.

- Basically, in the documentary the Duffers have the **Pinball Compendiums** (the history of pinball) next to them while they are writing the scripts. Why is that necessary?
    - There are only 3 volumes seen, and volume 3 is separated from volumes 1&2.
    - **Volume 4 is missing,** and volume 4 is the **yellow** one.

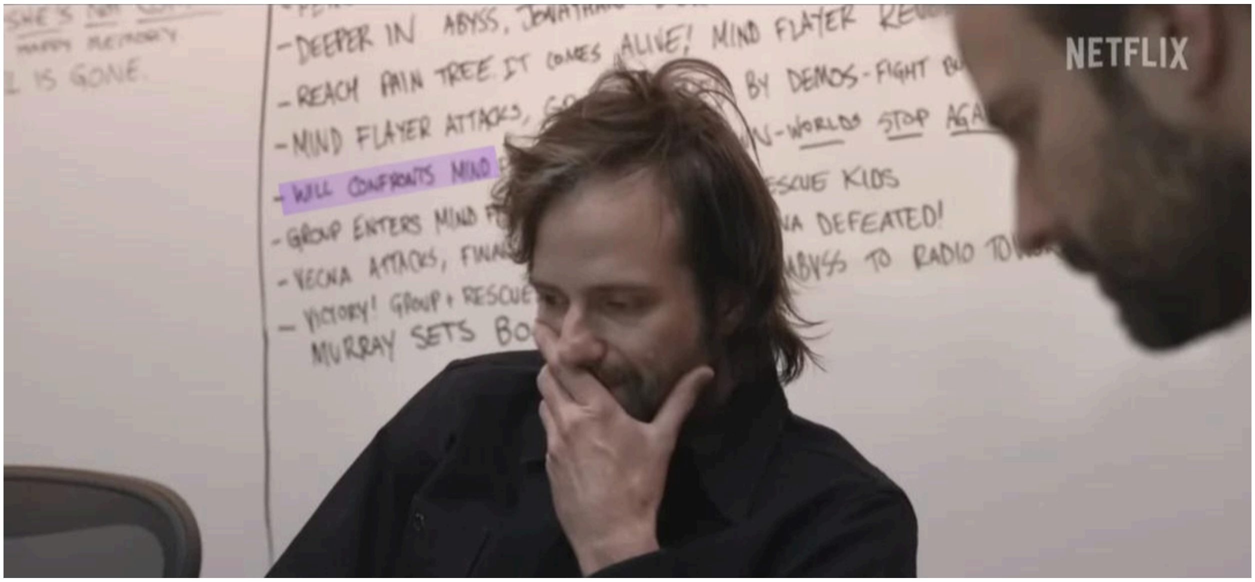
- On their segment of the Tonight Show, the Duffers randomly bring up how they collect pinball machines and that it's rare to do that.
- They also bring up pinball during one of the interviews in Japan.
- Pinball is mentioned during one of the WSQK broadcasts.

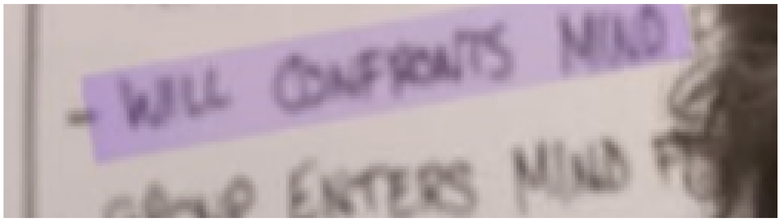

One of my partners in this studio is the great and
powerful mindy flare
The queen to my king, the chicken to my waffles,
the pin to my b– *gasp sound effect*, uhm,
nevermind. we go way back .
lock in to the rewind at 9 everyday at 9

- The missing yellow volume coincidentally features the two time travel pinball games. (Original post.)
- The author of the compendiums is named Michael.
- Pinball was criminalized for a long time starting around WWII because it was seen to be related to gambling. (It was kind of insane like prohibition level outrage over pinball machines.) ⟶ It was banned for so long that even after being legalized, pinball became associated with **youthful rebellion**. (Source.)
    - "As younger people saw it as a way to assert their independence, pinball arcades became a sanctuary of sorts where they could express themselves…[arcades] became a refuge where teenagers could **escape societal pressures and family problems.**" (Source.) ⟶ This article also mentions ST and how it portrays the image of arcades as hang-out spots.
    - Pinball is still illegal in some areas of the US.

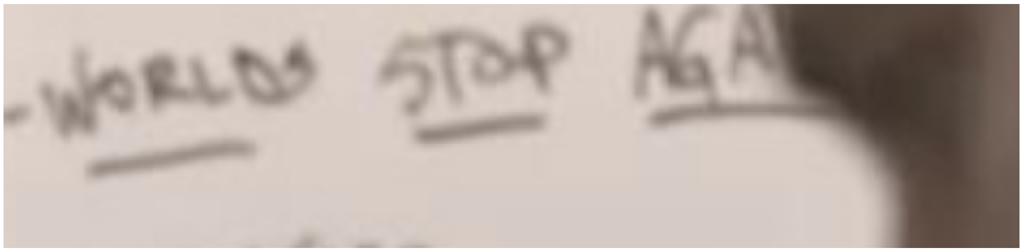
Writing the Scripts

- In the video that Netflix just released to tease the Stranger Things documentary, there is a shot of the Duffers sitting in front of a whiteboard with notes about the show. One of the bullet points says “Will confronts the Mind Flayer” but that never happened in the show.
    - Of course, not everything that’s thought of will make it to the final cut, but this seems like an awfully big thing to leave out.



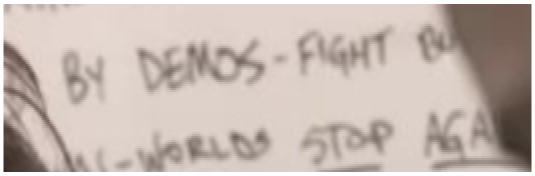


- Will DID confront the villain twice in the show, in 5.05 and 5.08, but both times he was confronting Henry/Vecna. → There’s always been a distinction between Henry/Vecna and the Mind Flayer as two separate villains so why would they stop making that distinction here?
- The notes of that same bullet point say “Worlds stop again” and are underlined. We’ve only seen the two worlds begin moving and then stop just that one time in 5.08.



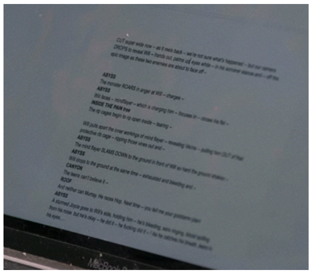
- There’s also a note about demos fighting them, but there were no demo–anythings in the entire final battle. → When originally asked about this, the Duffers made it a point to

say the demos weren't there because Vecna didn't know the group would be attacking him until they were already there.



- On El's fate:
  - Ross: You have to keep toying with the audience. Like "is she really going to go through with this?" And it's what everyone's gonna keep expecting.
  - Matt: We think she's made the choice to live.
  - Ross: I don't know - just kidding. She hasn't.
  - Kate: Just kidding. She has.
  - Matt: That's where I start.
  - Ross: I don't know if we have to play it like that.
- On El deciding to die by suicide: "I know we've talked about all the trauma she's experienced, and you have to be able to move on from that."
- Took a closer look at this shot of the script being written that includes details about WILL fighting the mind flayer. I did my best to transcribe what I could see:

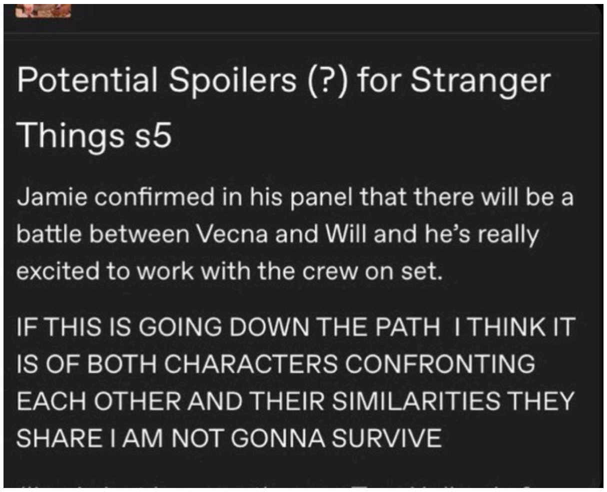
Abyss
The monster ROARS in anger at Will - charges -
Abyss
Will faces - mind flayer - which is charging him - …[too blurry]
Inside the pain tree
The rib cages begin to rip open inside - ….[too blurry]



Will pulls apart the inner workings of mind flayer - revealing Vecna - pulling him OUT of the protective rib cage - ripping those vines out and -
Abyss
The mind flayer SLAMS DOWN to the ground in front of Will …[too blurry]
Abyss
Will drops to the ground at the same time - exhausted and bleeding and -
Canton
The teens can't believe it.
Roof
And neither can Murray. He races Hop. Next time - you tell me your …[too blurry]
Abyss
A stunned Joyce goes to Will's side, holding him - he's bleeding, ears ringing, …[too blurry] than his nose, but he's okay - he fucking did it. …[too blurry]

  - So they really showed a close-up shot of a script for a scene that didn't happen?
  - All these conversations that happened in the writer's room or among groups planning with the Duffers just feel SO scripted as opposed to the rest of the documentary that feels like genuine footage of the film-making process.

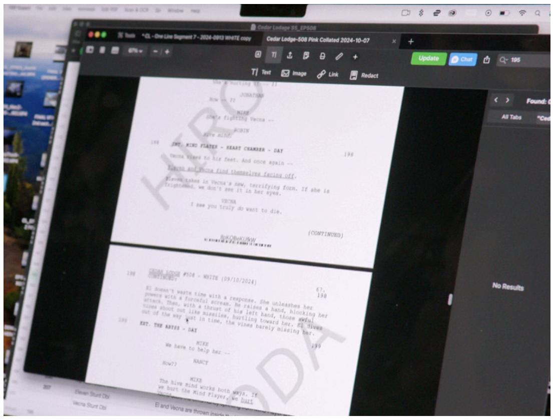
- The Duffers very clearly have Reddit tabs open on their computer with a close up of their screens. → The Duffers specifically said they would stop consulting Reddit and go back to what they wanted to write.
- This tweet and this tumblr post from November 2022 state that Will is the one who faces off against the Mind Flayer, which is consistent with what we see written in their notes.



Playing Dumb?

- The documentary actually included discussion about the plot holes seen in 5.08 but no resolution to those discussions.
  - Demo-fatigue
    - Paul Dichter: There have to be some monsters in the Abyss.
    - Matt: I agree.
    - Paul: There has to be Demogorgon, bat, dog like something. It's crazy if there's nothing there, I think.
    - Matt: Hm.
  - El's ambiguous ending
  - Patty mentioned by JCB himself!!!!!!
- Trusted writers like Kate Trefry (The Spy, The Sauna Test, The Nina Project) and Paul Dichter (Will the Wise, Dear Billy, Sorcerer) are out here saying shit like "There's some demo-fatigue." Give me a fucking break.
- Emphasizing how strange it is that they went into production without having finished scripts for S5 but… that is standard practice for television shows. **It is actually incredibly uncommon to go to production with fully finished scripts.** Having drafts/an unfinished ending allows the writers/directors to make changes as they go if they want to.
  - They even call to attention how they did the exact same thing for S1 when they talked about how Shawn Levy stepped up as a director to let the Duffers finish writing the season, but it's only made out to be a strange thing (pun not intended) when talking about S5.

- So you're telling me that these scripts are so top secret they are literally watermarked with people's names but here we got Matt and Ross's assistant handing out 5.08 scripts like candy?



- Maya says that she wants her lines with Vickey in the laundry room to be a whisper and Shawn approves it. → So you're telling me, they're supposed to be hiding from the demo-dogs, and the script didn't already have her whispering? I don't believe that for one second.
- Shawn asks Natalia if she thinks Nancy should swear because he's never heard Nancy swear before. → Kidding me? "Bullshit" is Nancy's tagline at this point.
- They have a whole segment about how they have to change the "goo room" with VFX to make it look less watery because the goo didn't goo the way they wanted it to goo. In a post-volume 1 interview, they talk about filming Ted crashing through Mike's closet and how the whole sequence took nearly 8 months to film because they couldn't get it to be perfect. They kept building and rebuilding that closet and figuring out how to make it work with different camera angles.
    - That was all for a moment that was about 3 seconds long. But they're trying to convince us that they wouldn't reshoot Nancy & Jonathan's whole scene in the goo room when the goo supposedly isn't the right consistency? → Thinking about it, people will remember the goo forever and would 100% notice if it wasn't done well or had to be faked in some way. Most people watching likely won't remember the specifics about the moment that Ted flies through the closet.
- This whole post details how the finale mocks the Game of Thrones finale by intentionally making all the same mistakes.
    - Defeating the bad guy too easily with weapons that were confirmed to not work before but now suddenly are enough to kill them.
    - The sudden death of the main female protagonist who never had a peaceful childhood.
    - The complete destruction of one of the main male protagonists that had him returning to his toxic relationship.
    - A rushed ending.
    - And so much more… go read the post!
    - In the comments, someone also mentions the controversial Starbucks cup that was seen in GoT that sparked a lot of hate on the show, similar to Holly's under armour logo that got edited out.

Final Table Read

- [In this interview](#) with Variety, Charlie stated: "I was sitting in front of Noah and Finn. I assumed it might get emotional. But 20 minutes in — and we're not even a third into the script — Noah is bawling his eyes out, like deep sobs. And then Finn was crying," Heaton, 31, explained. "That really set everyone off." ⟶ In the footage of the cast at the final table read, Finn and Noah are on opposite sides of the room.
- We also see the cast/crew reading from scripts on white paper, but the cast talked about how the final episode scripts were red.

  - I have learned that a possible explanation for this is that in filmmaking, even if red scripts are being used, there are white scripts printed for the table reads because it is easier to cold-read from a white page than a red page but those white scripts are then immediately shredded afterwards. ¯_(ツ)_/¯ who knows…

Promotional Content

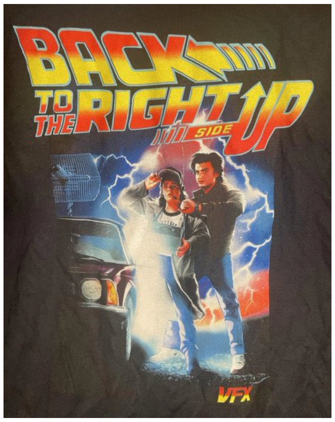
Posters

- Mike is the only one looking at the camera in the vol. 2 character posters.

- Mike and Henry are connected by the Mind Flayer in one of the S5 posters.

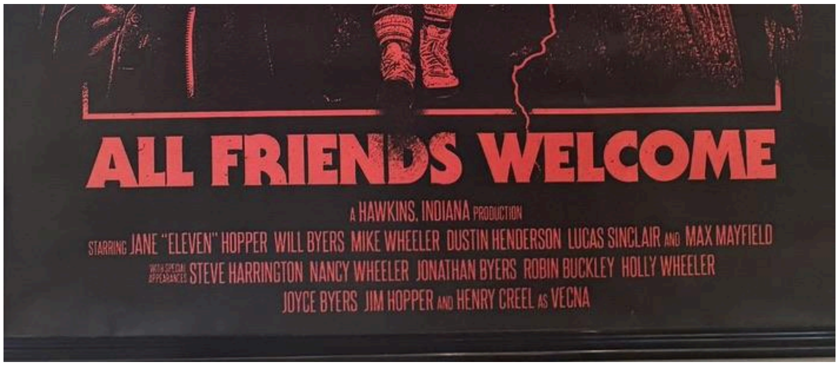
- The 9 that's very visible on Dustin's watch, and a 12 on Will's, in this poster for 5.01.

- This post points out how a Dustin & Steve version of a Back to the Future poster was blurred out even though the documentary came out after 5.08. What's the purpose of keeping spoilers from a show that's supposedly over?



- In the poster for 5.08, **a shield with a heart** on it is visible, which is a clear callback to the painting and that scene when Will called Mike "the heart."

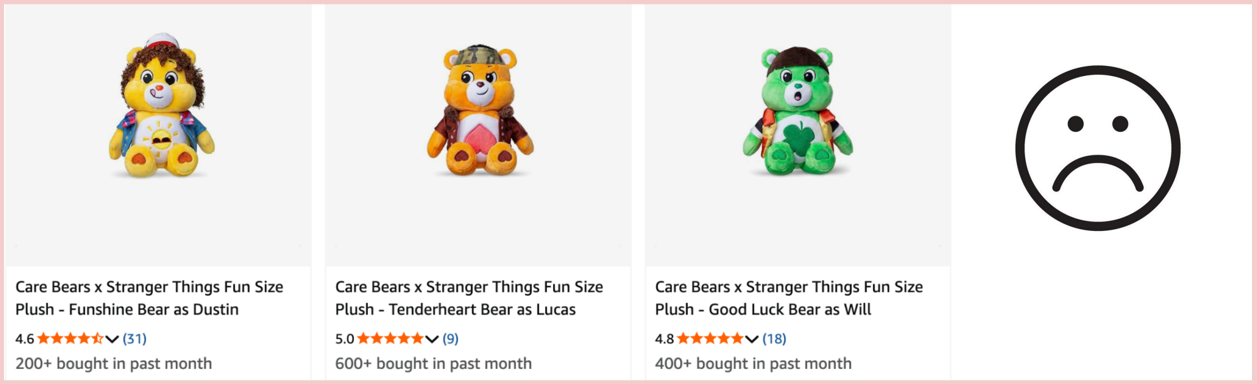
- The poster for the documentary shows many different cast members but for some reason, Finn, Millie, and Noah are the only ones circled in red.
- This poster for S5 depicts the characters as starring in a movie or play and calls it a Hawkins Indiana Production.



Official Merch

- Someone posted a picture of the Stranger Things daily calendar they received for this year. ⟶ For Jan 19, the page had a picture of Mike with the quote “Hey well, if we’re both going crazy then we’ll go crazy together, right?”
- Netflix is selling merch for Hawkins class of ‘87. The party is class of ‘89…
- The Will Care Bear has disappeared from the Care Bears Amazon Shop.
    - Meanwhile, Mike’s Care Bear is the bedtime bear. #wakeupMike ⟶ Bedtime bear’s story is all about keeping children safe, overcoming fears of the dark, and ensuring sweet dreams.
    - “His belly badge gives him the extraordinary ability to freely enter and exit Dreamland and influence dreams directly, meaning nightmares don't stand a chance.” (Source.)

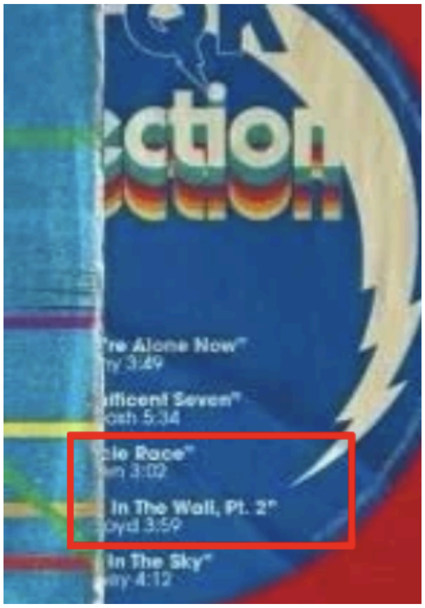
- Jan 26 → It has been brought to my attention that now Will's Care Bear is there but **MIKE'S IS NOW MISSING.** Also, even though Will's bear is technically on the store site, it's not available for purchase.



- Jan 28 update → All four bears are back, and now El's bear is there too.

- The mixtape labeled "For Will" consistently showed up in promotional content. → Interesting since music related to Will never really came up in S5. I actually got annoyed that the show emphasized Max listening to her song so much but when Will was unconscious, no one played music for him.

- [This reddit post](#) shows someone unboxing the official WSQK flashlight. → The box tells them to shine a blacklight on it, and when they do, you see the words "Vecna Lives!"



- WSQK Collection Vinyl was teased some time in the fall which people speculated would tease some songs that would be used in the show. Some of those songs never showed up, including **Bicycle Race by Queen** and **Another Brick in the Wall Pt.2 by Pink Floyd.**
  - Although the songs are VERY different, they're both about rejecting societal norms/conformity.

WSQK Radio Broadcasts

- The WSQK Gear Archive used to be a website where you could buy official merch. If you go to that website now, you see an image that says the tapes for Vol.3 have been lost.
- WSQK Radio has consistently given multiple kinds of hints at the idea of the show not being done. If you want to listen, someone archived all the broadcasts on this site.
- The final broadcast was on Jan 1, after the show had already ended, and started with a ton of static with a clock chiming in the background.
- Some of the things that could be heard through the static include:
  - "Hawkins, do you copy?"
  - "We have no power."
  - "Try rebooting."
  - "Is WSQK still transmitting?"
- Some people have been examining the sounds of the static and are saying it sort of sounds like someone is saying "Wake up, Mike."
  - For the photoshoot that the core four did for the finale, Finn is wearing a striped sweater vest that looks an awful lot like static waves. → Finn is also the only one of the core four who isn't looking at the camera in his solo shot AND ALSO in the group shot. (Link here.)

- “Another hour might be done but that doesn’t mean it’s our last hour. We got plenty of time to crank it up to eleven. If you do not know by now, our volume always needs to go up to eleven.” ⟶ Some people are interpreting this to mean that we’re getting 3 more episodes to get us to 11 total in the season.
- WSQK hosts gave several messages that someone is listening, watching, controlling, etc. (Original post.)
    - “And you’re not listening alone. You never were. Every voice, every song, every moment on this frequency traveled outward. **Spreading**, connecting, becoming something larger.”
        - Will in 2.04 talks about the vines & UD and says, “They’re growing, **spreading**, killing.”
    - “We really took over this town, didn’t we?”
    - “The studio is just where WSQK started from.”
    - “The queen at the controls, Mindy Flair.” ⟶ Mind Flayer.
    - “It was almost like you took the words right out of my mouth- and my brain!”

- The first song played on the final broadcast was the Final Countdown - again, the finale was already over by this point. Other interesting choices of songs* include:
    - You give love a bad name - lyrics say “Shot through the heart and you’re to blame.”
    - I will survive
    - I need a hero
    - It’s the end of the world as we know it
    - Africa - lyrics say “It’s gonna take a lot to drag me away from you.”
    - Every breath you take - a song about being watched

        - **Yes I do realize that these are also songs that were simply used in the show/popular 80s songs.*
- "The community seems more united and more curious than ever." → The ST fans are all asking questions about the finale.
- WSQK Radio comes back supposedly with new episodes starting Jan 11. Watch this video for more context.
- Mr. Whatsit requests the song **Silent Running by Mike & the Mechanics** from the album Out of the Blue. (Original post.) → A song with very interesting lyrics…
    - "Take the children & yourself and hide out in the cellar." → Take the children, like how Holly guided the children to safety but Holly has been paralleled with Mike several times. Cellar is also another word for a basement.
    - "Don't believe the church and state and everything they tell you."
    - "Can you hear me, can you hear me running, can you hear me calling you?"
    - "There's a gun and ammunition just inside the doorway. Use it only in emergency." → Flare guns are used only in emergencies to signal location when someone is in distress.
    - "Never hint at what you really feel."
        - So in summary, El is out and Mike & Will is in.
- People are also posting about how you can line up the WSQK episodes with other seasons as well. I haven't taken the time to do this with season 5 or any other season, but from what I've seen, there's some compelling match ups in a lot of key scenes. Maybe at some point I'll get around to actually looking into it.

Post-Release Content

Netflix Teaser Announcements

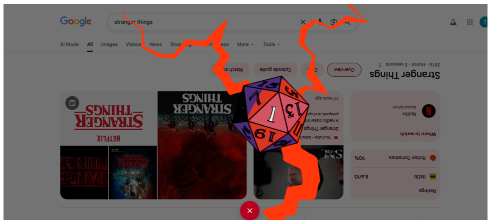
- Netflix posted a video that talks about something coming on Jan 7. The video talks about the universe sending you signs, and that you can ignore it, or call it a coincidence, but how they "**know we have questions.**"
- When the video mentions **coincidences**, the girl is sitting at a bus stop with the Vol.2 poster behind her ⟶ Directly behind her left shoulder is Will; Mike isn't visible at all because the bus covers up his part of the poster.

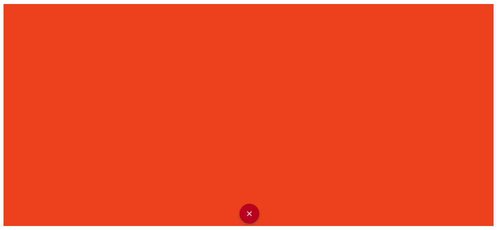
- On Jan 7, Netflix posted a teaser announcement for 2026 with the following caption: "In 2026, **you will be deceived, and you'll like it**. You will see old friends in a new light. You will actually look forward to family drama. For once. And you might even buy a corset (deep breaths). This year, you will question everything. What will you discover next?"

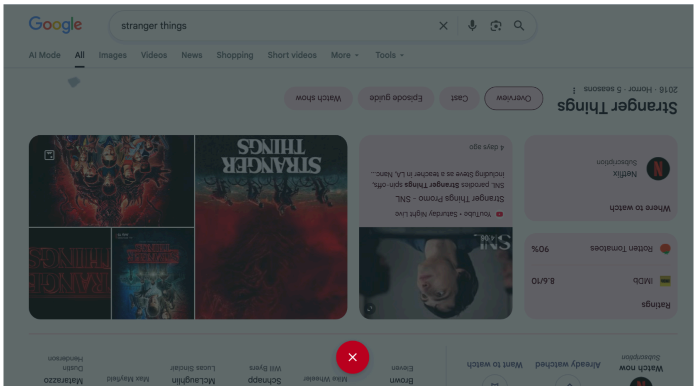
Google Search

- 20 days before Vol. 1 aired, Netflix posted a video of Finn rolling a d20, and the die seemingly landed on 20. But when you look at the surrounding numbers—7, 19, & 13—you see that it's actually not a standard D20. ⟶ On a standard d20, these surrounding numbers correspond to a nat1.
    - Not all d20s are exactly the same, but assuming he was using a **standard d20**, it looks like he would've won with that roll when actually he would've lost.

- Google has this animation of a d20 that cracks the screen and turns everything upside down when searching "Stranger Things". ⟶ The screen turns **orange** when right before everything turns upside down. (See more about orange in Color Imagery.)





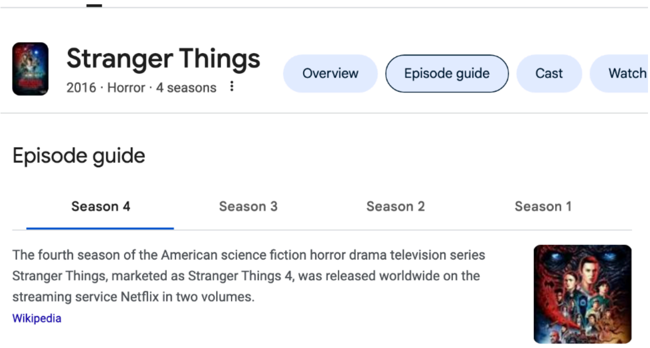


- When the animation appears, it shows the d20 on the 20 side, and when you click it, it rolls to a 1. ⟶ Comparing the images to an actual d20, the orientation and position of the numbers is a little off.
  - On the 20 side, the adjacent 2 should actually be to the top left, not directly on top, and the direction of the numbers is flipped to go **counterclockwise**.
    - When reading the numbers counterclockwise starting from the 2—since it's called to attention by placing it at the top— we get 2, 14, 8. ⟶ **Feb 14 @ 8PM?**

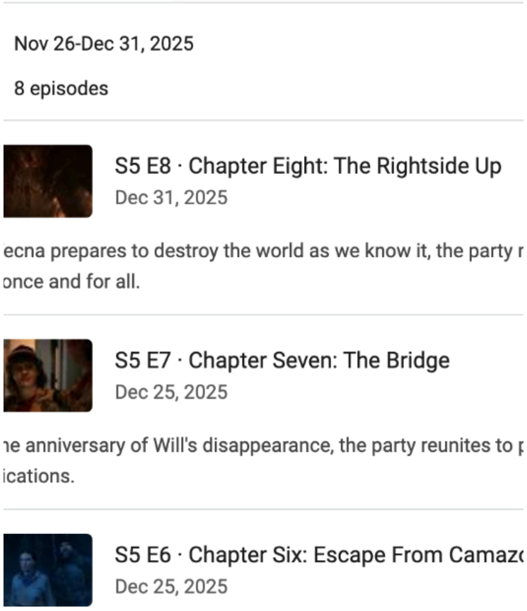
  - On the 1 side, the 13 and 19 are flipped, and even if the position of the numbers doesn't matter, it's strange that the 13 is deliberately positioned in a way that it appears upside down when none of the other numbers look like that.
    - So 13 is another number being called to attention. ⟶ I can't stop thinking about how 13 is positioned in a way that those 3 numbers can be read as 1/31 both upside down and rightside up, as in Jan 31. But also there isn't anything really significant about Jan 31 other than that's the day they're shipping the pre-ordered WSQK vinyls.

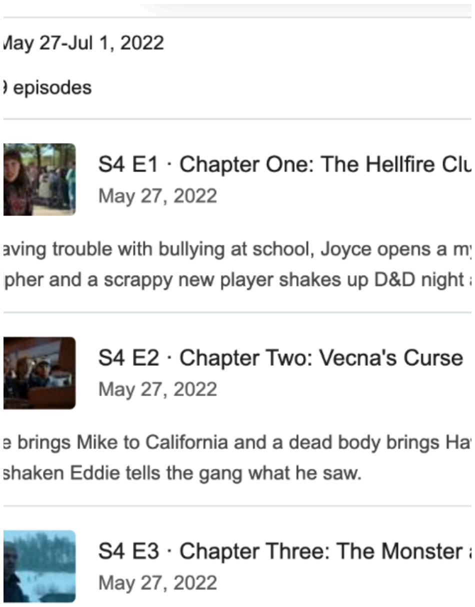
        - Maybe 1/31 could be the day that TFS is released on Netflix.
    - For some reason, 7 is the only number still in its original position.

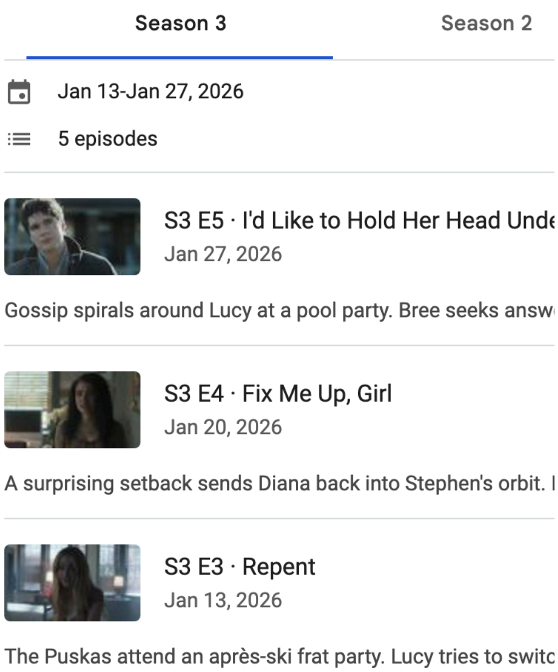
- Afternoon of Jan 18: **Season 5 has been disappearing and reappearing on Google.** ~~Also if you saw me freak out about S5 being taken off Netflix, no you didn't.~~

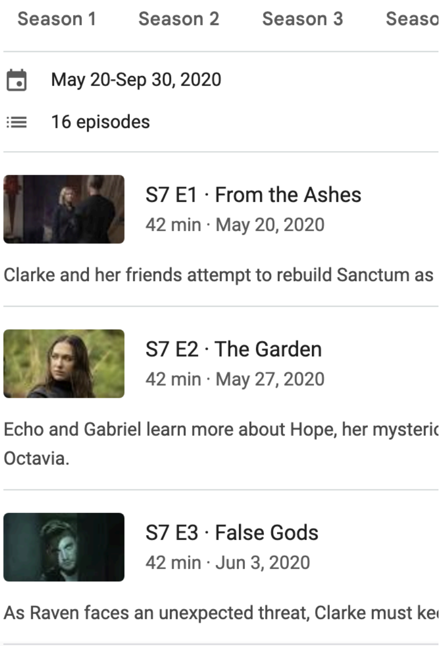


    - By the end of the day, S5's episodes were re-listed in descending order (8⟶1), while S1-4 were all listed in ascending order (1⟶8). This is how Google lists episodes for **unfinished** shows. ⟶ For reference, I'm including the episode guides for Tell Me Lies (unfinished) and The 100 (finished).

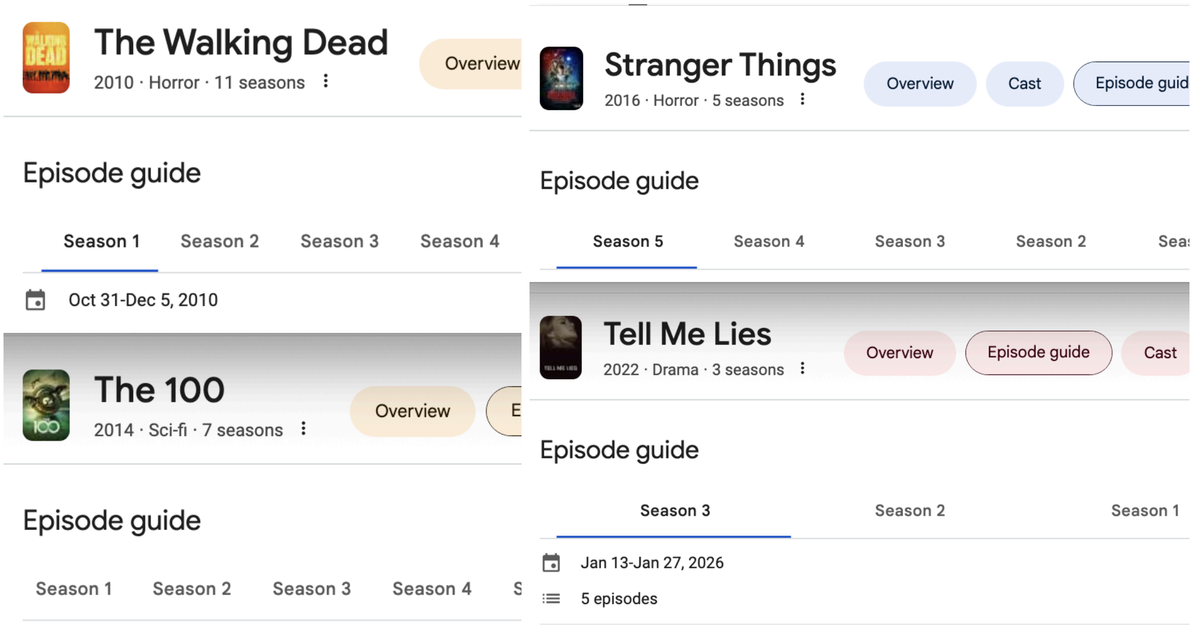






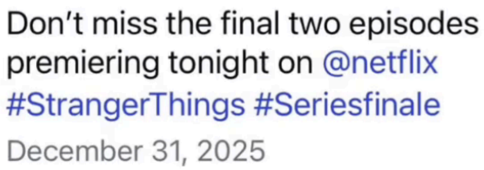


- Google also lists the seasons of the show in ascending order when the show is finished, and descending order when shows are unfinished.



Cast & Crew Social Media Posts

- The caption on [this post] by Cinespace Studios in Atlanta where the series was filmed:

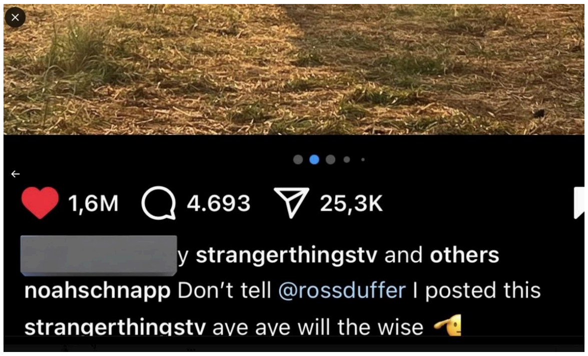


- Sometime in mid-January, the post was edited to just say "the finale."

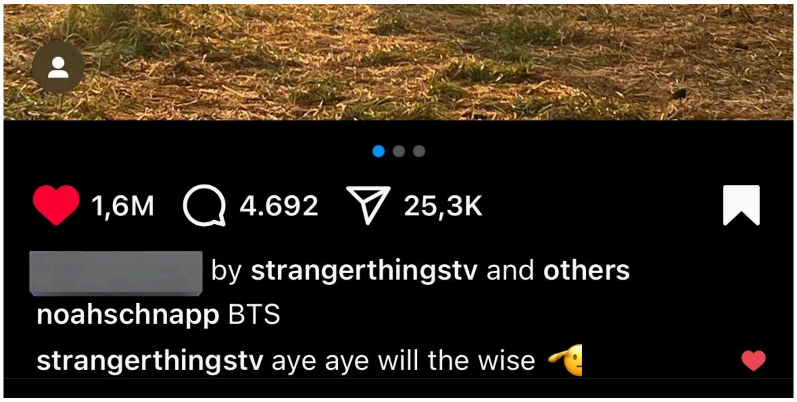
- Noah Schnapp posted some behind the scenes pictures a while back, and then later on removed some of the photos and changed the caption. → They coincidentally happened to be photos that

implied the existence of scenes we haven't seen yet, including something possibly related to Will being fully submerged in water.

- Before: Caption reads "Don't tell @rossduffer I posted this"



- After: Caption now reads "BTS"



- The mother of the actor who played Young Will in 5.04 posted this story on Jan 5 of him supposedly filming something where special effects needed to be added. → The "room" that he's in is used for motion capture, as in for shooting when a lot of special effects are needed for a particular moment.
  - There weren't ANY moments with SFX in the tape montage in 5.04. This could be pointing to the idea of Mike traversing across his memories to find a way out his vision/trance like Max did. It would make sense that he would encounter young Will along the way.
  - Young Mike made a similar post on Jan 7.

  - And what do ya know, Graham Harvey who played Young Jonathan has a post like that, too.

  - Someone pointed out that this could've been explained by the ST fortnite skins but that the parents are saying that they don't know why the kids needed time spent doing motion capture. That's total BS because of all the laws and restrictions for child actors, Netflix needs the parents' consent for EVERYTHING along with all the details of what it's used for. If it was for something the public already knows about, why lie?
- On Jan 17, Luke Kokotek who played Young Will in the 5.01 opening made this post where he shared his favorite BTS photos from filming that scene with the caption "Stay tuned… there is so much MORE on the way. 🌟🎥"
  - So much more? What else? Considering the Duffers insisting that the spin-off is going to be about new characters and new locations.

- The documentary shows JCB's final scene as Vecna at the "pain tree" but a crewmember shared this video showing everyone celebrating JCB's last day in the lab in the UD, which would be a completely different set.
- S5 began filming on Jan 9, 2024 and finished on Dec 20, 2024 according to Ross Duffer's instagram posts. (Start, finish.)
    - Total time spent filming: 346 days OR 59 weeks.
    - Ross Duffer made Instagram posts every 1-3 weeks or so during that year up until Aug 15 when he suddenly stopped. → His next post was on Dec 20 when they wrapped.
- Jan 12 is here. The documentary is out. It's been 12 days since the 5.08 dropped. **Why haven't we gotten any substantial interviews with the cast about the finale?**
    - The only finale content we've gotten so far has been pre-recorded during the November promotional period but that doesn't line up with statements that no one had seen the finale yet besides the Duffers/Shawn Levy/maybe a couple other people, not even the main cast.
    - The cast watched the finale for the first time on December 31 during the day.
- So the documentary is out but none of the cast have posted about it on social media? Not even one singular Instagram story?
- One of the crew members who was known to have worked on multiple seasons but NOT S1 posted some pictures on Instagram from her time working on S5. She included this photo of Barb, but we never saw Barb in S5 at all.

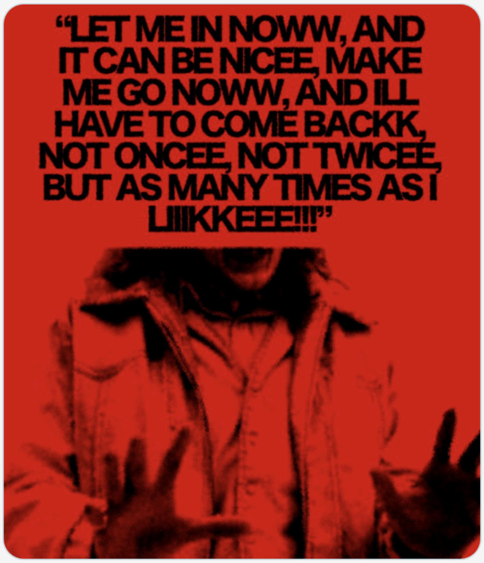
    - That, combined with all the extra promotion around Barb including an ad that Shannon Purser did for McCain Potatoes in 2023 where the catchphrase is "Together, we can bring back anything." → Compilation post here.
        - One of the WSQK broadcasts mentioned stocking up on fries & corndogs.

- JCB back at it again. This is the first thing he's posted on twitter since [Jan 7.]

> **Jamie Campbell Bower**
> @Jamiebower
>
> Is cooking. X
>
> 8:09 AM · Jan 30, 2026 · **129K** Views
>
> 425 398

  - This is a quote from the horror movie Longlegs; more specifically, it's the song that Longlegs sings to get a family to let him enter their home.
    - "Longlegs is a devil worshiper who practices the occult and leaves virtually no physical evidence at the scene of his crimes, where entire families are found murdered. Longlegs does, however, leave behind **letters that contain cryptic symbols**, which Lee—who is a symbologist—has the ability to crack." ([Source].)

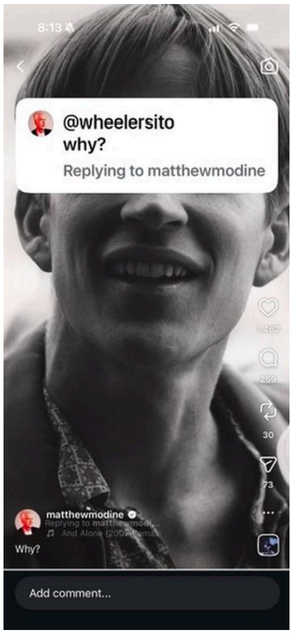
> **Jamie Campbell Bower** @Jamiebower · Jan 7
> That's it my loves. Holiday mode activated. X



Matthew Modine's Social Media

- So many posts from this man, he gets his own section.
- Jan 12, Matthew Modine posted this video of himself dressed like Dr. Brenner and walking into a room labeled "11."
- Jan 29, Matthew Modine just posted this video on Instagram of just his face with flickering lights and a ticking clock sound in the background. The caption just says "Waiting…."
  - And in the comments…

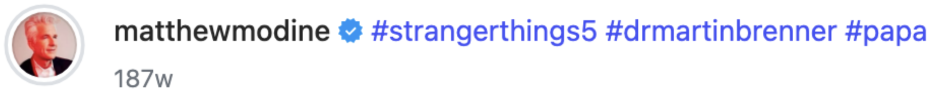
- Jan 31, he posted this video of him saying "I'm going to set. I'm playing Dr. Brenner on a little show called Stranger Things."
  - Feb 1, he highlights this comment as its own post, which was a comment on that video.
  - I'm not 100% sure yet but I'm quite confident this is just an older photo of Matthew.



- That video uses the song "Quiet and Alone" by **Peter Gabriel** as the audio. → Peter Gabriel is the one who sang the cover of "Heroes" that was used in 1.03.

- The song is featured in Gabriel's album "Birdy." ⟶ In an interview, Gabriel said, "Birdy was about the struggle of the spirit... It was about **the interplay between the traumatized Birdy**, the wounded victim, **and his best friend,** who's ostensibly the tough one. But in the end, **it's Birdy who's strong and his friend who's cracking.**"
- Another interview talks about how the songs in the album represent different emotions with their different music styles. ⟶ "Quiet And Alone… stand[s] for the confused, disturbing part." or in other words, the inner turmoil and "quiet desperation" of the character.
  - "A collection of various elements, it is demanding, irritating, stagnant. **Sounds like confusion and leaves you confused.**"

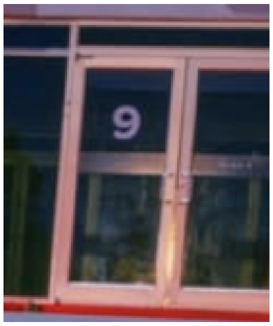
- Seems like Monsieur Modine had this one in his archive or something because it was only posted yesterday but somehow has a backdate of July 5, 2022. He also tagged it with #strangerthings5 but Dr. Brenner wasn't even in S5.



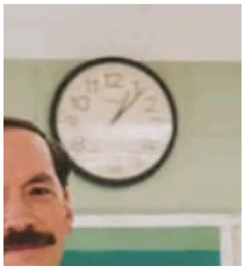
  - Apparently there's a new "edit grid" feature where you can place different posts in different locations on your profile without pinning them. So he has his Jan 12 post listed first, followed by this post from July 2022.

Official Social Media Content

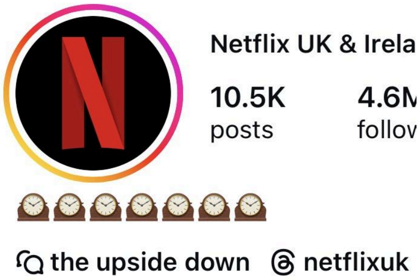
- These cast photos. ⟶ Someone also pointed out that these photos were taken at a specific building in Atlanta and that "9" isn't supposed to be there. **It was added in.**



  - Is it a 9 or is it an upside down 6? Either way, it has significance: episode 9 or season 6.
- Stranger Things posted a TikTok about Mr. Clarke on Jan 5. In the background, the time on the clock says 1:07. (Watch here.) ⟶ 1:07 is the timestamp for Vecna's death in 5.08.
  - It could be possible that all the Jan 7 references were actually pointing to the specific time or time stamp, 1:07.



- Netflix UK & Ireland’s Instagram bio now has 7 clocks.



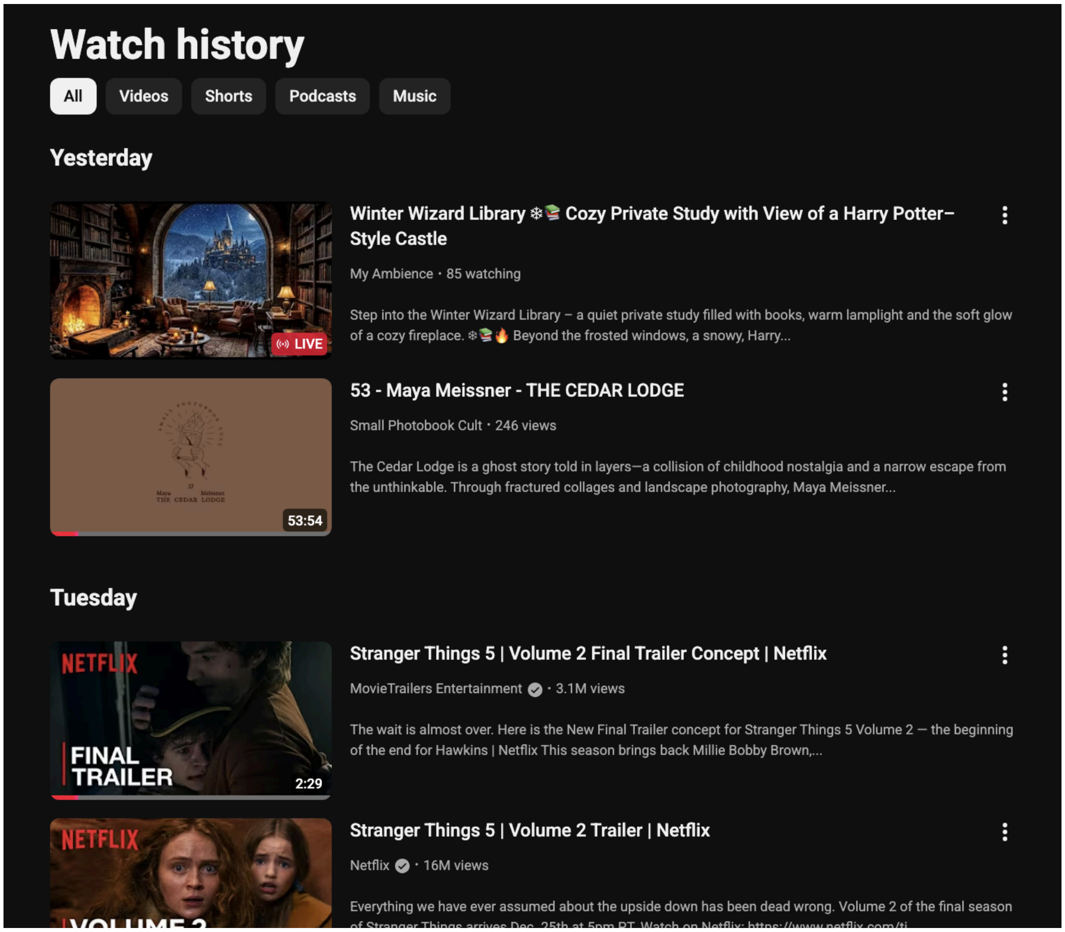
- Latest Stranger Things instagram post on Jan 7 is a reel of Robin talking on the rooftop in the epilogue with this caption:

- This post from Royal Mail that’s just a video of a van driving into a storm with a ticking clock and distorted chimes in the background.
- Every chapter from the Stranger Things puzzles are named and themed around a particular setting from the show. ⟶ The final puzzle piece is the Rightside Up, implying that the RSU is actually a place.
    - This suggests that the episode takes place somewhere called The Rightside Up; the world that Vecna created as a part of his plan. (Original post.)
    - After 5.08 aired, Caleb said something along the lines of "play along for something new!" ⟶ how could there be something new if the finale already aired?
- Netflix added this new video animation when you type “Stranger Things” into the search bar. Apparently it’s been changing slightly every day. (Original post.) ⟶ The street name shown in the video is Maple St, the same street where the Wheelers live.

- Jan 28 update: This is now gone from Netflix, not sure what day that actually happened though.

- STonstage posted [this photo]() on Jan 21 that says “This isn’t the end. It’s just the beginning.” → TFS is being promoted again? Maybe because it’s being released on Netflix soon.
  - That wording also makes me think of the stunt coordinator’s shirt in the documentary: “Possession… is just the beginning…”

- Jan 29 - Interviews and other content with the cast have started disappearing (as in the official posts for them, not clips or reposts from the general public). Here’s a couple we know of so far:
  - Vol. 2 trailer that featured the song that we now know is Billie Joe Armstrong’s cover of Heroes.
  - The interview where Millie says the final season is “meta.”
  - Finn’s FULL performance of Trailers After Dark on the Tonight Show. → Which is fucking crazy because I literally watched this LAST NIGHT and now can’t find it anywhere, and for proof I shall show you my watch history HAHAHA.

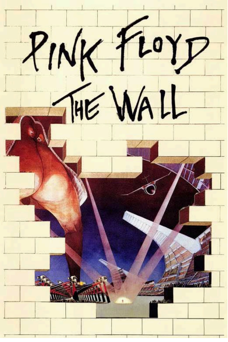


Finn's Episode of SNL

- Finn hosted SNL on Jan 17. It's typical for celebrities to be SNL hosts around **1-3 weeks before** a big project drops as a promotional tactic.
- This post has a good summary of Finn's time hosting SNL on Jan 17.
- SNL used a different warm-up song for the first time in 13 years. ⟶ That song was "Let's go **crazy together**" by Prince.
- Heated Wizardry: Finn as Gay Harry Potter in love with his best friend. ⟶ Strange choice since it's a parody of Heated Rivalry which is about two rivals getting together, so why wouldn't they portray it as Harry & Draco?
    - "You're a homo, Harry."
    - Honorable mention for this movie review from Noah.
- Mike in Manhattan: part of a ST parody specifically for Mike's ending where he moves to NY to keep writing. Dustin and Lucas meet up with him there. ⟶ Mike's nose starts bleeding at one point.

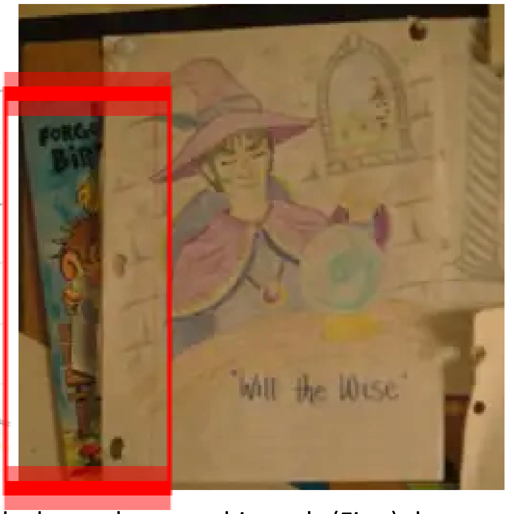
    - Conformitygate shout out.
- A lot of people are pointing out how Finn was dressed similarly to Mr. Whatsit in his opening monologue and was hitting the Henry Pose™a few times. (Not sure how much I buy into this but I'll include it anyway.) ~~These lowkey look like mug shots.~~

- A$AP Rocky performed in front of a wall spraypainted with "Punk Rocky." → The font and placement of the letters resembles **Pink Floyd's The Wall** poster.
    - Another Brick in the Wall Pt. 2 was one of the songs included on the WSQK vinyl that didn't end up being in S5, and multiple Pink Floyd The Wall posters show up in the show, usually behind Mike and also in his dorm room.
    - Winona Ryder was also in [the music video for Punk Rocky](#).



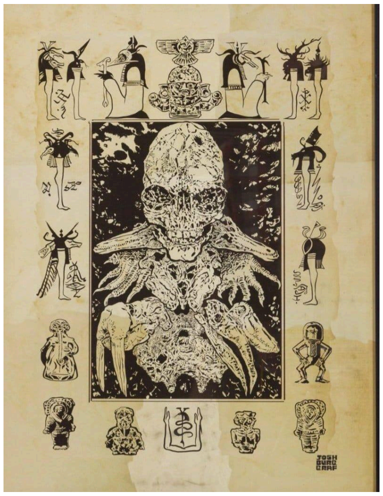
- Finn is wearing a bolo tie that matches the center of the grey merry-go-round in his skit where he's playing Mike in the future. → This grey piece of the tie is sitting on his chest aka over his heart.
    - Recall that Holly and Max were able to open that piece of the merry-go-round and enter through it like a door.
    - Also recall that Holly recognized that it changed colors because she knew it was supposed to be **yellow**. → Another symbol of Will being erased from Mike's mind (or being greyed out)?

- A bolo tie also is a symbol of personal expression because it allows the wearer to stand out from traditional norms and express individuality.
- It also looks like the necklace seen in the drawing of Will the Wise. Behind that drawing is a card that says “I forgot your birthday.” #birthdaygate



- Boy Band was a skit about a dad who can't accept his son's (Finn) dreams to tour with his indie band. The dad wanted his son to become a pop star like him.
  - Other notable details: The dad’s **orange** vest & the grandfather clock.

- Guy's Girl was about a guy (Finn) who brings his new girlfriend to hang out with his friends, and they end up being very surprised by how masculine the girlfriend is and how Finn's character acts very feminine around her. (They also just hate how obnoxious she is, that's more what the skit is actually about.)
    - This picture is seen in the background and looks an awful lot like Vecna.



Tales from '85

- First teaser released on Feb 2. → Announcement for the teaser was on Feb 1, the first thing that any official ST accounts posted since their "last" post with the closing credits on Jan 18.
- Ross Duffer posted about it on Instagram and said, "One of the bonuses of animation: **our actors don't age**." → That's a very odd thing to highlight about your new project…
- Release date: April 23.
    - **National Lover's Day.**
    - 1985: Coca-Cola released **New Coke.** → New Coke was meant to be a sweeter version of the old recipe to better compete with Pepsi, but it wasn't received well.
        - "Consumers were furious, seeing the change as an attack on a cultural icon, not just a soda."
        - July 11, 1985 - "Coke brought back the original formula as "Coca-Cola Classic," which quickly outsold New Coke." → July 11… 7/11…
            - Also kinda funny thinking about how the scene where Lucas is drinking New Coke in 3.07 takes place on July 4, 1985, and that it was discontinued exactly 1 week later.
        - ~~I hate these people.~~
        - Wasn't there something else about July 11 that was significant? And also something about 80 days? I don't remember.
    - 1984: Discovery of **AIDS** virus is announced.
    - 1616: Shakespeare's death date. (And also apparently when people celebrate his birthday even though his actual birthday isn't known. #birthdaygate)

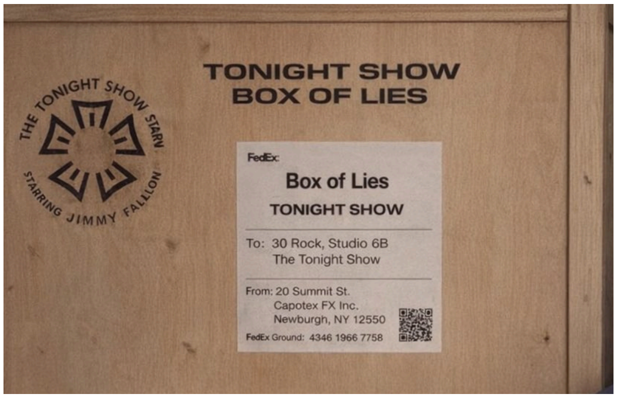
- Saint George's Day: Patron Saint of England. ⟶ Soldier known for his bravery and faith.
  - His symbol is the Saint George's Cross, now seen on the English flag. ⟶ What a coincidence. The cross looks like the shape of Hawkins lab and the spot of the memorial at the library. (Recall from X Marks the Spot.)

  - The oldest story of Saint George tells of how he saved a town from a man-eating dragon, which also serves as a reminder of how **good triumphs over evil.** ⟶ Circling back to Will's painting. (Source.)
  - Heyo, I guess Mike is supposed to be a parallel or Saint George or something idk.

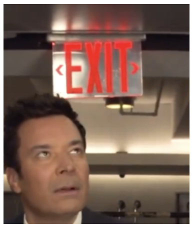
- Lessons learned after this teaser:
  - New Coke = Tales from '85.
  - Old Coke = Stranger Things.
  - Mike = Saint George.
- Vine curves around the letters that spell out Meta.

Jimmy Fallon & The Tonight Show

- JCB appeared on Jimmy Fallon's show on Jan 6. During the entire interview, he only ever referred to the finale as "Episode 8." The morning of Jan 7, this video was posted of Jamie appearing as a dance/zumba instructor.
  - During the video, Jamie ends the video by saying "Let's channel our energy. Tomorrow it begins," in a menacing tone before counting up to 12 ("Let's do the clock.")
- There are boxes that say "Box of Lies" in the background of Nell Fisher's guest appearance on the Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon.



  - More exit sign imagery, circling us back to the Truman Show.



(Love Jimmy's little head here.)

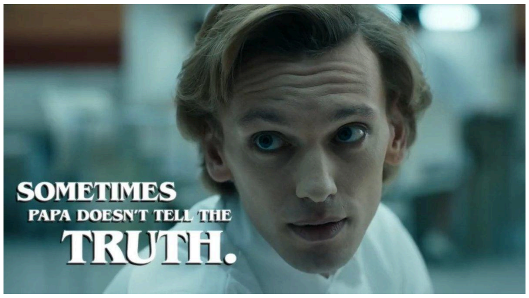
  - Nell says "I might regret this but I think my favorite color is **blue**." → More hints pointing at the idea that Holly is actually Mike.
  - A random football player included in this 1 minute video? → Pointing to the importance of the Super Bowl maybe?

Interviews

**Putting this part last because interviews feel like the least reliable source, at least in my opinion. There's a reason why eye-witness testimonies are considered the weakest form of evidence.*

- Duffers address how when in the mind of a serial killer, everything feels "nice and cozy but there's just something off about it and that can feel very nightmarish in its own way and just as scary as a big CG monster or scarier." → The epilogue feels much the same way. (Interview link, ~25:10)
- There's barely been any interviews or post-season content released that includes the cast. This is really off for Netflix & the show in general considering how much promotional content they released leading up to the season. But now that it's over, the only interviews we're seeing that discuss 5.08 are with the Duffers.
  - By this point in time for S4 Vol. 2, there were several different kinds of videos released with the cast reacting to certain scenes, answering questions, playing games, talking about their time on set, etc.
  - They were doing this throughout Vol. 1 & 2, but now for 5.08, they've decided to focus on the Duffers over the cast?
  - *This is just from what I've searched for online, so I could be wrong, but I looked for a while and I can't seem to find much relating to the cast discussing 5.08 specifically.*
  - Jan 25 - still barely any post-finale interview content…
- It's very strange that the Duffers changed from being incredibly dedicated, serious writers creating the most complex and emotional show to what they are acting like in interviews now: arrogant, obnoxious, self-righteous, lazy.
  - It doesn't make sense that they emphasized paying attention to details THAT much to then giving answers like: "we just didn't feel like focusing on that."

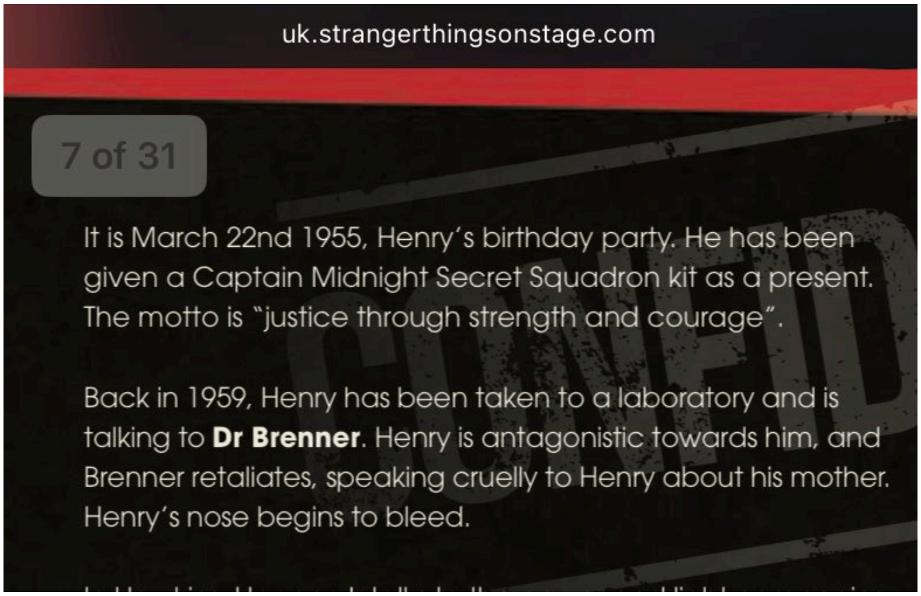
- The Duffers latest response was about why there weren't any demogorgons in Dimension X. ⟶ Apparently, they were overused, so the Duffers claimed "demogorgon fatigue."
    - No. Just no. They just have to be lying because this of all things just DOES NOT make sense. They emphasized returning to the roots of the show and what came from S1 & 2 so much, there's absolutely no possible way that they just decided to not include demogorgons anymore because they just didn't feel like it anymore. **They are lying.**



- The Duffers were acting really suspicious when asked about making false endings.
    - "I love when people do that but how do you have the time? Oh my god…" looking away from the camera. Ross was stuttering the whole time while Matt was saying "no no no no no" over and over again, etc.
    - Kate Trefry, one of the writers of the show and the First Shadow play, says the Duffers have terrible poker faces, and they can't hide anything.
- Shawn Levy discussed when he watched the ending and he said, "when I watched the FINAL version of the FINAL episode of the FINAL season…" ⟶ bro, why are you saying final so many times? (Interview link, ~1:30)
    - In that same interview, he says "a lot of sins are forgotten and forgiven if you can stick the landing." (~1:10) ⟶ Sins? Like letting your fans down with a fake ending? Yeah, not sure I can forgive that so easily but we'll see if I end up not hating your guts at least.
- Shawn Levy making it a point to talk about how important it is to stick the landing and not make people feel like idiots for caring in the first place (i.e. Byler fans).
    - He also talks about a question that he wants to answer but he can't even say the question because that in itself would be a spoiler. ⟶ The question could be "Is byler going to happen?"
    - "This is a show for the heart from the heart." ⟶ Mike is called the heart of the party/show.
- The scene on the tower with Mike and Will - Noah said he asked the Duffers to add that in "to close out a specific chapter" and then Millie quickly talks over him to say "storyline." Then, Noah also quickly corrects himself to say "storyline."
    - "A chapter" implies that there's more to the story. "A storyline" implies this is the end.
- Finn said that the ending for Mike is something bigger than he ever could've imagined. ⟶ Mike didn't do anything in the finale and ended up alone.
    - This is also strange for Finn since he's an actor who seems to genuinely care about the characters he plays and puts a lot of dedication into his work.

- The Duffers mentioned how when they wrote S5, they stopped looking at opinions online, and specifically mentioned not looking at Reddit anymore. → Reddit is well-known to be an extremely conservative/anti-byler space in the fandom.
- Finn saying he can't say what song he uses to get into character because it's a spoiler. (I refuse to believe that song was Purple Rain.)
- Someone (I can't remember who) mentioned that they were really confused until they read the final script. Noah also consistently says that the show is very confusing but also genius.
- The boys consistently said they loved their characters' endings but there isn't much to those endings, especially for Mike and Will.
    - Also is weird for Noah Schnapp, an out and proud gay man, to say he loved his character's ending when his ending consisted of becoming the face of the biggest case of queerbaiting in television, especially when he openly shipped byler throughout the series.
- Finn stated that the Duffers told him that the van scene with the painting would "pay off." → again, the painting was just never brought up at all in the season until the final minutes when we just see it on Mike's wall.
- When asked how come Will didn't feel any pain when the team was killing Vecna, the Duffers said, "They just wanted to focus on Henry in the finale" despite acknowledging that Will was still connected to the hive mind.
    - If Will is being erased from Mike's mind, it could also explain why we weren't seeing Will in pain when they were chopping Vecna's head off.
- The Duffers said there would be 5 deaths but we've only seen 3 - Kali, El, and Henry
- When Birthday-Gate first became a thing, the Duffers said it was just an accident that they picked March 22 as the date to show on the video camera in S4 even though March 22 was established as Will's birthday in S2.
    - The odds of that happening though are **1 in 365 or 0.274%**
        - If it was actually an accident, they could've just edited that part to fix it. (Especially because this video footage writing would've been added in anyways, they can go back and fix that easily.)
        - When other mistakes were pointed out though, like the Under Armour logo on Holly's sleeve, they were fixed post-release.
        - They never fixed the date on the footage.

- ○ **Henry's birthday is ALSO March 22**. The odds that they would pick that same date for a third time is **1 in 133,225 or 0.000751%.**


uk.strangerthingsonstage.com

7 of 31

It is March 22nd 1955, Henry's birthday party. He has been given a Captain Midnight Secret Squadron kit as a present. The motto is "justice through strength and courage".

Back in 1959, Henry has been taken to a laboratory and is talking to **Dr Brenner**. Henry is antagonistic towards him, and Brenner retaliates, speaking cruelly to Henry about his mother. Henry's nose begins to bleed.

- It's strange that Mike's epilogue involves him ending up alone and staying behind when this is what the Duffers have said about Mike's ending in the past:

Interviewer: What ending do you want for Mike?

Ross Duffer: Mike is a character that we really love, and we want him to find happiness and someone who loves him the way he wants and deserves to be loved. We want him to move from Hawkins, just like Will. Also, a great writer career, like he always wanted. *[laughs]*

  - ○ *[laughs]*
- Caleb at some point said "My finale is different from everyone else's so I wouldn't know [the answer to the interviewer's question." → Huh? He quite literally had the same finale as everyone else.
- Joe Keery suggested using the original David Bowie version of Heroes in the credits. (Source.) → Is it because it's a song they felt like using OR is it because we're seeing **another** situation where Mike thinks he lost Will?
  - ○ Thinking about it in this context, it's an interesting choice since the same cover of Heroes (by Peter Gabriel) has been used twice before.
  - ○ Now it can be seen as one more thing that's been **changed or feels off.**

fransi pas @ffkdzzz · Jan 1

"Heroes" only starts playing after mike thinks he lost Will **#conformitygate** #BYLERMASSPSYCHOSIS

62 5.1K 28K 246K